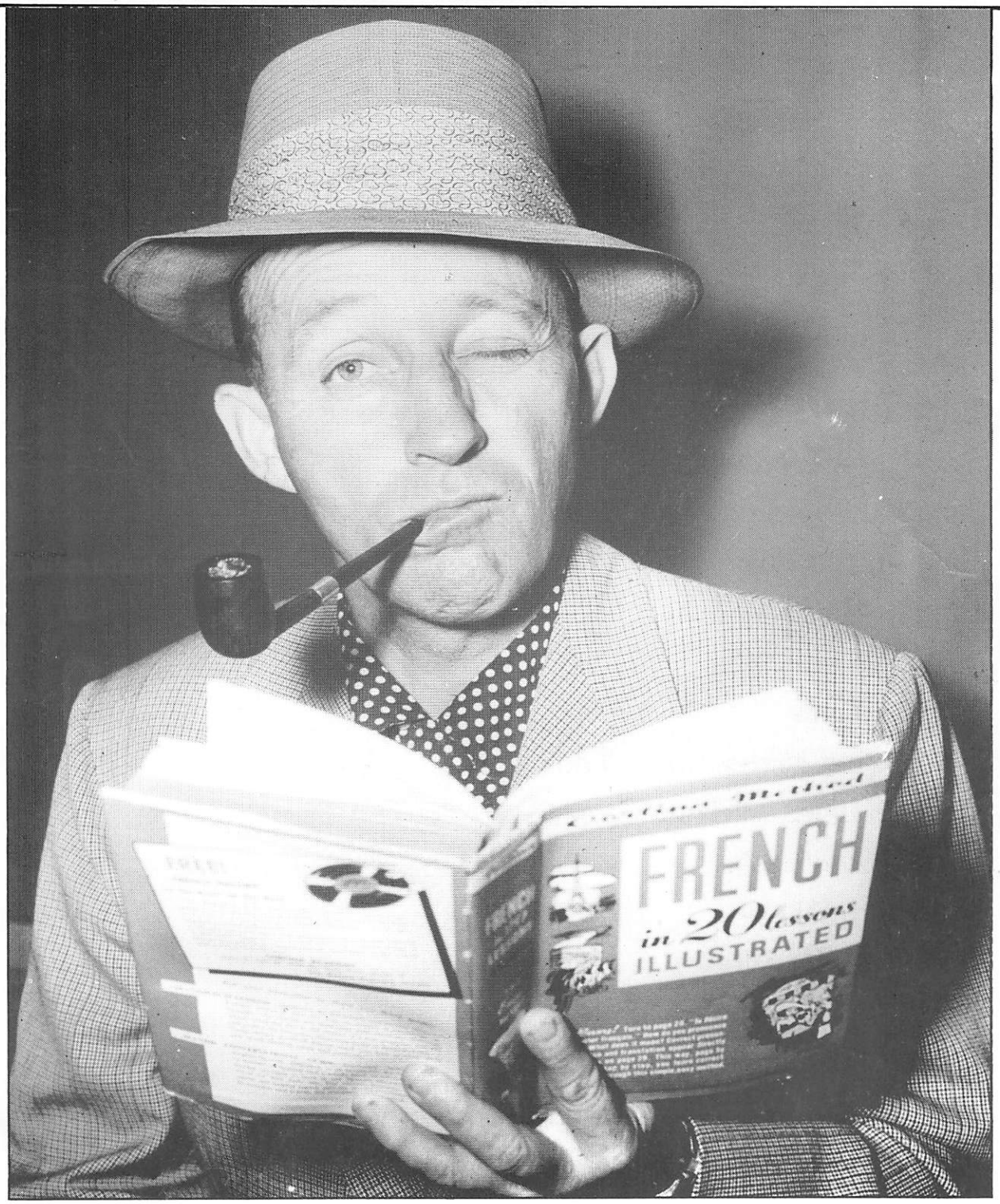
BING

AUGUST 1990

NO. 95



THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded 1950

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EDITORIAL

The British Bing Club first saw the light of day in March 1950 — 40 years ago. Remarkable to think then that we are still here, sharing a common admiration of perhaps the finest natural singing voice of the 20th century. Michael Crampton chronicles some of the highlights and the personalities of those 40 years later in this issue. What's good too, though is that within the pages of this August 1990 issue, we have two of the stalwarts of those years writing again for us. Leslie Gaylor perhaps needs no introduction, whilst Ralph Harding's return to the pages of a Crosby magazine is long over due. Welcome aboard Ralph.

We would be perhaps forgiven if our 40th Anniversary Issue was entirely retrospective. But we also have something new. We mentioned in BING 94 the new play "Moonshiners" which is built around Bing's early life. The ICC was it seems well represented when the play ran for two weeks in Westcliffe-on-Sea. Bert Bishop (another welcome return), John Marshall and Malcolm Macfarlane all give us their impressions.

As to the rest, we have our usual regulars, including a very compre-hensive newsletter from Derek Parkes. Several correspondents lament the passing of the LP and whilst there are still some to be had (old and new), it would seem that it is the CD which will take Bing into the 21st century. Or is it? Read what Derek has to say. Whatever the trend, Bing has survived through the 78, the 45, the Extended Play, the Long Playing Record, the 8 track cartridge, the cassette, and now the Compact Disc. We face the future with no fear for Bing (but perhaps with not a little concern for our bank accounts!).

Space is precious and apologies again to those whose offerings have had to be left out. One conundrum to end upon. The photograph below shows Bing in an unusual role. Can you name the occasion? The answer is in Trading Post.

Ken Crossland

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

In the last issue of 'BING' John Bignall paid an enthusiastic tribute to Reg Bristo and in so doing he revealed his prediliction for the writings of Bernard Levin. May I admit to being a fellow admirer of Mr Levin's work and take the liberty of making a further quote which will lead me on to discuss, briefly, members' response to the April questionnaire.

"One of the most important qualities of enthusiasm is a desire to communicate it, for who, enjoying in more than common measure something that is readily available, does not wish others to enjoy it too."

Such sentiment is apparent throughout the replies which have been received in response to the April questionnaire. Many members feel strongly that there is a great need to raise the Crosby profile such that there is a greater awareness amongst the general public, the media, broadcasters and especially young people, that Bing deserves greater recognition for his unique contribution to twentieth century popular music. Ideas on how we might promote our interests have been suggested and I will be exploring these and other suggestions with you when we analyse the questionnaire more fully in December. Members will be interested to know that so far 170 returns have been received. Elsewhere you will see reference to a proposed Directory of members and I hope that those members who have not yet returned a questionnaire will now let us know their views.

Since April I have continued to forge a stronger link with other club officers and elsewhere you will see a listing of their names and addresses. I do hope that you will write to them and convey your support and hopefully as a result of joining them you will increase your knowledge of your hobby.

I have been very encouraged by the wonderful letters I have received from some of our Stateside members and they will be pleased to learn that Wig Wiggins of Arlington, Virginia has kindly offered to act as US representative for the ICC from 1 January 1991. Wig will receive 'BING' in bulk and distribute to his fellow North Americans. Full details will be published in December. Wig has recently retired from the Diplomatic Corps and he has generously offered to place some of his spare time at our disposal. Welcome aboard Wig and we look forward to your support in the coming years.

Financial matters have tended to permeate ICC affairs since your new team took over and I am pleased at last to report that we are clear of any financial worries for the year 1990. Late payers have helped to bridge the gap but the most important element in our turn around is a generous contribution from the sale of calendars. This contribution is unique to this year and will not be repeated. May I extend grateful thanks to John Joyce for his inspiration in producing the calendar and also thanks to those who bought copies. Please support the project again this year, profit will not be as high but any surplus will help us keep solvent. A full financial statement will appear in December. Members may however also wish to be aware that a trust fund, established by Reg Bristo and Jean Bignell to support the Bing Crosby Historical Society has been wound up and a cheque for $254.35 sent to BCHS.

Members will be saddened once again to learn of the passing of three more of our loyal members, namely **NINIAN FAICHNEY, ERIC VINCENT and TED BERRYMAN.**

NINIAN was a long time member of the club and for many years a member of Tape Crosby. He was a great friend of our Secretary's family and we often enjoyed the Faichney hospitality on our visits to Scotland. A couple of years ago Ninian came down to stay with us and we have warm memories of his jovial company. Ninian faced death as he faced life, without complaining. He will be sorely missed.

ERIC had a jovial disposition and he brought happiness at recent Crosby social events when we were priviledged to hear his lovely voice. To the end he kept up his spirit and I will cherish his last letter to me, sent a few days before he died.

TED was a loyal supporter of the ICC and we share in the sorrow of his passing with his Brother Mr E. Berryman, who remains a member of the Circle. May I extend to all three families sincere condolances from members of the ICC.

Finally may I ask members to carefully consider the letter from Larry Kiner which covers an idea which I have independantly being pursuing with other club officials, namely the need to unite Crosby groups, worldwide. Present group structures would not be altered, but a loose federation is suggested. Please write with your views.

Until December, heartfelt thanks for all your letters and support and where replies are due, I will be in contact soon.

Michael Crampton

Spokane Records

Larry F. Kiner

P. O. Box 724, Redmond, WA 98073-0724

15 May 1990

Michael Crampton
19 Carrholm Crescent
Chapel Allerton
Leeds LS7 2NL
ENGLAND

Dear Michael,

In order to perpetuate the performances and memory of *Bing Crosby*, I think it is imperative that the various Crosby clubs form some sort of alliance in addition to maintaining their individual status. I suspect that it is the only chance for their survival in the long. As time goes by (there's a good song title) our ranks are thinning and unless the existing clubs do something, in twenty years they will all be gone -- some, possibly sooner! There is an old applicable phrase: "United we stand (survive), divided we fall."

For the board members of this group, here are some recommendations: Getting all to agree and then have all meet or at least correspond with a show of unified strength to plan for the future. These board members should be made up of representatives from England, Australia, South Africa, Canada and would include Club Crosby, Bings Friends & Collectors Society, the San Francisco Bay Area, the east Coast of the USA, ICC, et al.

This would be a good geographical group in the Crosby Collecting Community. And it would be an opportunity to reach an ultimate goal of having a permanent place (Bing's Birthplace) that would be similar to "Graceland," though not as grandiose which would be Bing's preference.

A need for a bonafide tax-deductible organization, dedicated to Bing's memory, would be most important part of this plan. This "united effort" would not take anything away from the present groups structures, rather it would add membership in a single organization in the city of Bing's birth. Each club would be a part of the framework of that organization, thus honoring Bing in perpetuity.

The need to unite the Crosby groups worldwide is needed and time to act is now. I would propose only to be an initial focal point for gathering your thoughts and setting up some sort of forum to launch this effort.

Please let me have your thoughts on this very important and urgent matter -- if Bing's memory is to live beyond all our lives, I feel we must do something and the support and recommendations for all the leading worldwide Crosby collectors and group leaders is mandatory.

Sincerely,

Bing Crosby Sings on Cardboard

by Ralph S. Harding

One of the objectives which we set ourselves when we took over the magazine was to attempt to persuade some of Crosbyana's luminaries back into print. It is therefore a great pleasure to welcome (back) Ralph Harding to the pages of BING. To many, Ralph will need no introduction. Those who haven't come across Ralph before will find his letter later in the magazine of interest. Ralph, over to you.

From the earliest known recording (Edison solid wax cylinder dated 26th June 1888) to the latest Compact Disc issue, recordings have been produced on a great variety of materials. The early Edison cylinders were manufactured from hard wax and each one produced was recorded individually. The singer performed into an acoustic horn, a large megaphone, and his voice was cut, by a series of vibrations, on a hard wax cylinder rotated by clockwork on an acoustic mechanical gramophone. Each wax cylinder was a one-off take and if a hundred cylinders were produced, then the artist had to sing the song a hundred times. Later a series of up to sixteen machines were used so that each time the artist sang his rendition, sixteen wax cylinders would be produced, thus lessening the strain on the vocalist and stepping up production. As can be easily understood, it is impossible to press copies from a cylinder.

The flat disc changed the whole procedure, the first being made by Emile Berliner before the turn of the century. A "master" wax was recorded from which a "stamper" was made, copies would be pressed off the stamper and thus the system which produced the 78 rpm record and the LP record was introduced. However the materials used varied considerably. The normal 78 rpm record was usually pressed on a mixture of shellac and other materials. Other records, notably the Columbia "silent surface" were made from a variety of materials including paper and coated with shellac. These were known as laminated records and used by many companies. Even if the surface cracked, and it often did, the records would play without any snap, crackle or pop. Other Companies produced records manufactured from coated cardboard, celluloid, a thin type of plastic, and, incredible as it may seem, a record was pressed on hard chocolate, labelled with the inscription "Play me and eat me". There is nothing new about thin cardboard coated records. The earliest I possess in my collection is a coated paper seven inch disc entitled "A Personal Message To You" by The Prince of Wales which is dated around 1926. An LP was recently issued, Sunbeam MFC-9, entitled "The Cardboard Dance Hall" which contained sixteen renditions by various jazz bands from 1930 which were issued on Durium and Hit-Of-The-Week Records. These mainly were single-sided thin card, plastic coated discs and sold for 15 cents from news stands, and featured such bands as Freddie Rich, Harry Reser, Ben Pollack and Duke Ellington.

So what has all this got to do with Bing Crosby? Simply that he also made cardboard and plastic coated records as did other artists. Bing recorded these discs mainly for promotional purposes, as a form of advertising. They were cheap to produce and distributed freely. For example, Remington Roll-A-Matic Shaver "Music To Shave By" was issued as a tear-out insert in an American magazine. I have always collected these paper curios by Bing Crosby and other artists. I have no idea of exactly how many different issues were produced, some by Bing Crosby Corporations, so I have listed what I possess and I would be most interested to learn if any phonocards issued of which I have no knowledge.

MUSIC TO SHAVE BY with Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong, Rosemary Clooney and The Hi-Lo's, Auravision (Columbia) 6" paper disc, 33$^1/_3$ micro-groove. For the Adjustable Remington Roll-A-Matic Shaver. Advertised as the first Hi-Fi recording every to be included in a National Magazine Advertisement.

A very amusing medley of songs ("Ain't Misbehavin', I'm Shaving Myself For You") and Bing singing and describing the Remington Shaver as "The greatest invention since the guillotine".

I AM THE BEST DRESSED MAN IN THE WORLD Bing Crosby. Prestodine Productions. 6" paper disc, 33$^1/_3$ microgroove. For Y-IRON DRIP DRY SHIRTS. Bing parodies this song to advertise Y-IRON shirts. Why iron?

BECAUSE Bing Crosby accompanied by Buddy Cole (organ). De Luxe, manufactured by Bing Crosby Phonocards, Inc. N.Y.22. This is a perfectly straight version and almost certainly identical to the version recorded for CBS. However lables vary and I possess a blue label and also a red and pink label. 6" paper disc, 78 rpm.

SWINGING ON A STAR Bing Crosby. Postcard on which is pressed a 5" recording, 78 rpm. The postcard features a very colourful photo of Bing in Santa Claus bonnet and a holly bow-tie (quite different to that shown on LP covers) with the message, "Hi Folks! Dreaming Of A White Christmas. Put this record on any 78 rpm record player and let me tell you how to make it a real White Christmas . . . and a Merry One" (signed by Bing). Manufactured by Bing Crosby Phonocards, Inc. N.Y. Bings sings a very interesting parody advertising Gas Cookers.

YOU TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ME Rhythm Boys with Bing Crosby and Paul Whiteman Orchestra. RCA Victor, E3-CS-7922 issued for HALO SHAMPOO of COLGATE PALMOLIVE CO. Jersey City. 7" disc, 78 rpm and also issued on a thin type of vinylite, in a special paper sleeve. As far as I can tell, this version is identical to that commercially issued on Victor 21398.

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM BING CROSBY presented by The Longines Symphonette Society advertising the American issue of the multi-album "Bing Crosby's Treasury — The Songs I Love".

7" disc, 33⅓ rpm. The sleeve offers a free copy of "Bing Crosby's All Time Hit Parade" and the chance to win $100 a month for life, and also states that these offers apply to Bank Americard Credit Card Holders only.

HOW LOVELY IS CHRISTMAS Bing Crosby sings a slightly different version to that issued by Golden Records. Manufactured by Bing Crosby Phonocards, Inc. N.Y. 6" disc, 33⅓ rpm. The whole disc is coloured green with black half labels. Issued to promote GOOD YEAR TIRES and distributed through Good Year Service Stores.

I have not included other promotional records such as GREEN TIGER PRESS 001 "Teddy Bears' Picnic" and other 5", 6" and 7" plastic records advertising World Records, Readers' Digest Records and Longines Symphonette Society records as these are all pressed on thin plastic or vinylite and do not come under the category of paper phonocard discs. Finally, I have spare copies of "Music To Shave By" and "Because". Any collector interested in making an offer?

Important Announcement

PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY OF CROSBY COLLECTORS AND APPRECIATORS

The ICC is co-operating with other Crosby Clubs with a view to publishing a Directory of members and their associated musical interests. The Directory will be for sale to Club members and will contain only information that they wish to be included.

The objective is to facilitate greater contact between members of the various clubs and to draw collectors and appreciators closer together to demonstrate our common aim of honouring and perpetuating Bing's memory.

At this early stage we would appreciate your views on what information ought to be included in the directory. It is particularly important that members who do not wish their names to be included should write and let us know now. In support of this project it would be helpful if members who have not yet returned their questionnaires, do so now.

The Directory will be a permanent testimony to those who admire the work and artistry of this century's most profoundly influential singer. Please give us your support.

New Members

We are delighted to extend the hand of friendship to the following new members.

Harry Fulmer (Lindenwold, New Jersey, U.S.A.), Michel Marechall (Narbonne, France), Thane Cooper (Aged 20 and from Tasmania, Australia) and from the U.K., John Fahy (Theydon Bois), Paul Pinch (Haverfordwest), Roy Bramhall (Sheffield), Mr. R. Cole (Halesowen), Mrs. R.E. Harding (Harlington), Rodger Addey (Woodley, Berks.), Pat Hetherington (Carlisle), Miss P.M. Sargent (Ruislip), Paul Doye (Norwich), Reg Wood (Rawdon, Nr. Leeds), R.E.C. Bissell (West Midlands), Mr. G.W. Marshfield (Southampton), Mrs. J. Halder (Carshalton).

Bing on the Box

British television's exposure of Bing has been somewhate patchy over the last twelve months but the following films have been noted.

Going my Way (Channel 4, 2nd August 1989)
Star Spangled Rhythm (Channel 4, 19th August 1989)
Let's Make Love (BBC 2, 26th November 1989)
Holiday Inn (BBC 2, 23rd December 1989)
Road to Zanzibar (Channel 4, 23rd December 1989)
Road to Utopia (Channel 4, 24th December 1989)
Road to Singapore (Channel 4, 26th December 1989)
Blue Skies (BBC 2, 30th December 1989)
My Favourite Brunette (BBC 1 17th April 1990)
Here Comes The Groom (BSB, 4th May 1990 — first of three showings in the month)
Scared Stiff (BBC 2 11th May 1990)
Robin and the Seven Hoods (BSB, 1st June 1990)

The final film has also been released on video by Warner Bros. and can be bought for £9.99. Also, one morning in November last year, TV-AM showed the Pathe News clip of Bing singing "Amor" at the Stage Door Canteen in 1944. This was part of their series looking at the Second World War. Finally, Channel 4 on New Year's Eve had a film called "Entertaining the Troops" which contained various Bing items including parts of "Buy, Buy Bonds" (from the 1945 one reeler All Star Bond Rally) and "Don't fence me in" (from Swingtime with the Stars — a 1944 short). These excerpts were of excellent quality and it would be nice to see more of these rare films.

Channel 4 has been showing some old Nat King Cole shows this year and inevitably, we Crosby fans will have been wishing that some of Bing's TV shows could be transmitted. Members will recall that Jim Lowe donated a huge number of old Bing magazines to us and whilst reading through these, I made a note of any of Bing's TV appearances which were mentioned. Much of Bing's incredible career has been progressively documented, but to the best of my knowledge, no listing of his TV appearamces has ever been published. I thought that this might be a project that the ICC could undertake and I have therefore typed out a preliminary list of Bing's forays into TV. When I saw Eric Griffiths at the Moonshiners show, I mentioned my research and he straightaway told me that he and the late Bob Roberts had once embarked on a similar project. Eric kindly sent me his notes and these have been amalgamated with my own list. Are there any other members who may have information which could help us? Hopefully we have identified most of Bing's own shows but we must be lacking a tremendous amount of information about his guest appearances. I should particularly like to hear from our USA members but any information will be gratefully received.

Finally, whilst talking about research, is there anyone out there who has any detailed knowledge of the Woodbury radio shows? A listing of these with songs and guest stars is much needed also. Let's here from you!

Malcolm Macfarlane

Bing in Gateshead

There are two main gatherings of ICC members in the UK each year. One is the Leeds meeting organised by Michael Crampton, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary on October 7th this year. The other takes place in that stronghold of Crosbyana, Gateshead, and this is masterminded by Crosby stalwart, John Joyce. Phil Morgan reports on the May meeting:-

The 1990 Crosby social season in the North-East opened with a "Tribute to Bing" evening held at the Swallow Hotel, Gateshead on Friday 11th May.

As always at our functions in the North-East, the evening was well supported, particularly so this year with the attendance being up by around 50% on last year's event. The guests (around 60 people) were given a warm welcome by the organiser, John Joyce. Indeed, without wishing to cause John embarrassment, the whole success of our ventures is mainly due to his splendid organisation and ability to put people as ease. This is reflected in the fact that each year visitors, nay old friends, come from all parts of the country to spend a memorable evening with Bing. Friends such as Ron and Peggy Pearson from Southend, Eileen and Arthur Allum from Felixstowe, Michael Crampton from Leeds, Malcolm Macfarlane from Nottingham, John Stonehouse from Lincoln, Barry Sandercock from Buckinghamshire, Peter Murray from Edinburgh and Dennis and Jean Saville from London to name but a few. The North-East contingent was boosted this year, thanks to the publicity given on local radio by Peter Hetherington, a local broadcaster very much to the fore in his support of Bing.

Introductions over we settled down to a very enjoyable evening which included video presentations of "Rare moments with Bing Crosby" and "The Christmas Years". The meal was up to the usual high standard of the Swallow Hotel. There were a couple of quizzes, the first being based on the middle sections of popular songs and the second on "verses", all sung by Bing, needless to say. The standard of answers was very high as might have been expected.

The evening ended around midnight, voted by all present as a great success. Plans are already underway for next year, but more of that at a later date.

Phil Morgan

"Crosbyana"

A 40th Anniversary Celebration by Michael Crampton

There had been Crosby Fan Clubs before the formation of the British Bing Club in March 1950 but all these associations seemed to have been "Fan Clubish" but nevertheless friendly and were often spoken of with affection by people who later became members of the British Crosby Society. The late Alf Farrow of Hull often referred to the 'Bing Crosby Friendship Club' with affection.

The inspiration for the formation of the British Bing Club must be attributed to Leslie Gaylor, Arthur (Art) Allen, Jean Rainey and Dot Hardiman. Bing gave consent for his name to be used in association with the club in March 1950. In the Summer of that year the clubs first journal entitled "Crosbyana" was issued and written support was given by no other than Ralph S. Harding who wrote pseudonymously as Seagull and The Caddy. So there at the beginning are the names of two people who have sustained their interest in Bing Crosby's work and still share with us their enthusiasm for our wonderful hobby. The word Crosbyana seems to have been first used by Dr. J.T.H. Mize in his book "Bing Crosby and the Bing Crosby Style" in 1946, but perhaps the person who will always be associated with the name is Ralph Harding since he called his home by this name and perhaps he did more than anyone else to popularise the term.

Thus a journal was born the successor to which you hold in your hands as you read this article and little could the original team have anticipated that we would be paying tribute to their original pioneering work, forty years on.

The first period in the clubs history ended around 1953/4 when the officers decided to change the name to The British Crosby Society and the magazine became Crosby Post and these two names were to be retained until 1966 when the club was restarted as The International Crosby Circle.

This second period was long and fruitful and here we must acknowledge the inestimable contribution of the late and much liked Frank Murphy. Frank was a joyous person to be with and although he sometimes acted rashly few will deny that he gave gave great pleasure to hundreds of enthusiasts all the way from December 1950 to 1972 when he retired from the ICC for domestic reasons.

Frank was ably assisted down the years by Dot Hardiman, Stan White, Ted Laker, Pat Sullivan (U.S. representative), Colin Pugh, Cecil Westrop and Tony Carpenter (Editors during the early 60's), Bill Taylor, Les Phythian, Fred Reynolds, Jack Manners, Bob Roberts, and many more who lent support to ensure the continuous publication of the Crosby Post.

Crosby "Collectors" were not always catered for in the opinion of a few members and thus the first Crosby Collector magazine was produced by a breakaway group in 1957. Ten issues of this little publication were produced and within its pages we can see the first publication of the Road to Bing Crosby discography. The journal survived for ten issues and here we found Editorials by Ron Davies, Stan White was an active President and Derek Parkes acted as discographer. Derek and Stan were to remain supportive of the British Crosby Society despite breaking away to cater for the "serious" collector.

During these middle years of the club's history, club officers were instrumental in organising meetings in their homes and thus began the tradition which culminates each year in the ICC's annual dinner/meeting at Leeds. These wonderful meetings were held in the homes of Bill Taylor, Jack Manners and Frank Murphy and members who attended these events will never forget the hospitality of the hosts and the wonderful feeling of comradeship which prevailed. We are forever indebted to these wonderful people.

The 1960's saw the publication of that discographical masterpiece The Road To Bing Crosby and for myself and many collectors this remains the most fascinating document ever published about Bing's recorded work. The Authors were Derek Parkes, Frank Reynolds, Les Phythian, Bob Roberts, Charles Wareing, Geoff Milne, Charles Cowdery, Reg Davies, Les Gaylor and at the helm ensuring a brilliant work was Ralph Harding. Someday a new team might be brave enough to bring this publication up to date but until that time, therein, you will find the story of Bing's commercial recordings. The first three parts of the Road To Bing were published via Crosby Post with the final volume appearing in 1966 after the formation of the ICC.

Frank Murphy and Leslie Gaylor published an LP-Ography and thus members were well catered for with recording publications.

In 1966 the third phase of the club's history began when Frank Murphy decided to change the name of the Society to The International Crosby Circle and although this change proved beneficial to collectors and appreciators alike, the change was not greeted with warmth in some quarters. Acrimonious

exchanges were made, albeit for understandable reasons but eventually the greatest good was to result from Frank's decision to restyle the British Crosby Society. For not only was the ICC born and subsequently did the new club flourish but collectors benefitted from the formation of Ralph Harding's International Society of Crosby Collectors and thus the second "Crosby Collector" magazine was born. Ralph's wonderfully informative publication reached 100 pages at times and ran for 67 issues until Christmas 1972 and although the two new magazines and clubs were apparently in opposition they soon established friendly relations and many enthusiastis held dual membership.

In 1972 Frank Murphy had to retire from the International Crosby Circle and he was succeeded by our late and esteemed Secretary Reg Bristo. The qualities which Reg exhibited were admirably enunciated in the article by Fred Reynolds in 'Bing' 93 and repitition is not necessary here. However I would like to say on a personal note that Reg showed great interest in the happenings of my family and I had the pleasure of staying with him many times over the years. I will treasure those memories.

From the outset Reg was supported by John Bassett as editor and John's contribution resulted in an enhanced quality magazine presentation. Support was given to Reg by many members but outstanding contributions were made by Bert Bishop whose perceptive and pertinatious comments on Bing's recordings were especially looked forward to. Bob Roberts and Leslie Gaylor helped with publicity and Fred Reynolds and Keith Parkinson covered Bing's film work with erudite comment and interest with Fred's work culminating in the publication of his book "The Road To Hollywood". Fred's work will surely survive as the definitive publication on Bing's film work.

For almost twenty years Reg Bristo guided the ICC through fascinating and interesting times and we can never forget this period of the club's history.

During the 70's and 80's the ICC was privileged to publish further discographical work from that worthy team Bassett and Bishop, with the second edition of the LP-Ography being released in 1973 and finally the hardback version of "Bing Just For The Record" was published in 1973. We shall forever be indebted to John and Bert for their work.

In concluding this celebration of the clubs achievements over these forty years I am conscious that a more in depth study is required to do full justice to these achievements and this work I promise at a later date, meanwhile as we enter our fifth decade I hope that members will unite to celebrate their common goal of honouring the most profoundly influential vocalist of this century.

The International Crosby Circle

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING and 40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE BRITISH BING CLUB

MANSION HOUSE, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS

SUNDAY OCTOBER 7th 1990 3.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.

A cordial invitation is extended to all ICC members, partners and friends to attend the above double celebration. A special 'Birthday' cake is being provided by Renee Chester and there will be the usual happy entertainment with special prizes being introduced for this auspicious event.

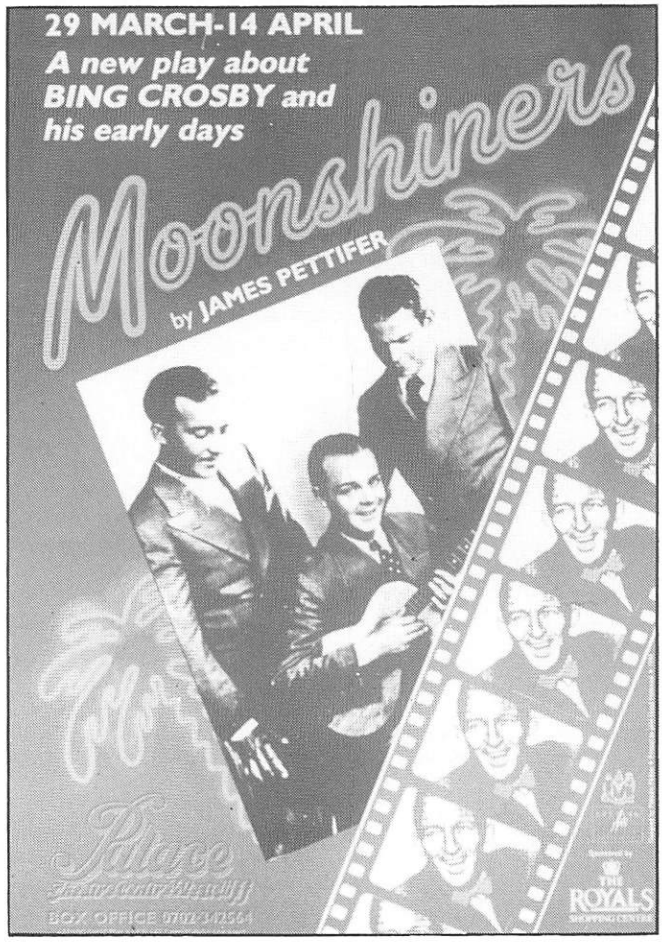
Members are invited to bring along any 'Bing' items for sale or exchange and the opportunity is presented for you to tell us your views on how you see your Club developing during the 1990's.

Please book by obtaining ticket from Michael Crampton, cost £11.70.

Accommodation can be obtained by ringing The Ash Mount Hotel 0532 658164.

Moonshiners

This was the play by James Pettifer which we mentioned in the last edition of BING and which was put on at the Palace Theatre Centre, Westcliffe from March 29th to April 14th. A number of members attended and both Ron Bosley and John Bassett contributed interesting displays of photographs to the foyer. The play was an important development on the current Crosbyana scene and fully deserves the in-depth and detailed review which follows. First of all, it is a real pleasure to welcome back our old friend BERT BISHOP to the pages of BING. Bert has provided the following comprehensive description of the story:-



If chroniclers of the life and times of deceased personalities are to be believed, there are more skeletons in closets than graveyards. Character assassination has become the 'norm' in biographical works, primarily because the general public has a penchant for the sensational concerning erstwhile respected public figures. To the tune of much hypercritical "tut-tutting' from the punters the authors ring up the tills and look for another likely, and lucrative, subject. That is why I believed there would never be a film about Bing. Great voice — fair actor — but as the central character of a dramatised biography, too much 'Mr. Nice Guy' and, basically, too blamelessly self-effacing. Which, from a producer's point of view, would be far too dull to be box office material.

It was with some incredulity, therefore, that I learned that not only had there been a play written about Bing but that it was being premiered in Essex, and at a theatre that I pass each day to work! But then doubt struck. Who could possibly play Bing? What did the advance programme notes suggest by 'a greatly flawed man'? What on earth could the Westcliffe Repertory company possibly know about the Rhythm Boys and their music? However, the theatre marketing manager gave us a reassurance that the play was not a 'hatchet job' . . . and so it was that some sixteen Crosby afficionados gathered at the Palace on the night of the7th April; and suitably charged with the odd glass of our favourite tipple we made our way into the auditorium.

We were confronted by an empty stage on the backcloth of which a silent Charlie Chaplin 'movie' was being shown to a suitable piano accompaniment, and the realisation came that we had been transported back in time to the mid-1920's and were, in fact, the audience in Hal Bommer's Clemmer Theatre, Spokane, Washington State, U.S.A.

The house lights dim, the picture flickers and dies, and out on to the stage steps Mr. Bommer himself . . . "I give you our new attraction — a local boy — Mr. Bing Crosby!". On comes young Crosby, and to a tuneful piano accompaniment gives a pleasant rendition of "Five Foot Two, Eyes Of Blue" sung in a lively but straight style. But all this, within the play, is just a rehearsal, and Bommer seeks to reassure an uncertain Bing, worried about audience reception and his mother's reaction. After all, Bing recounts, she's spent good money on his Jesuit education and law school — "singing's not a proper job", she says.

"I was thinking", continues Bing, "Have you ever thought of having a duo up here? 'Cause I don't go much on singing on my own." He expounds the talents of his friend, Al Rinker, and their little bit of singing experience together. At which Bommer agrees to having Rinker on a week's trial providing they split the thirty dollars he's already paying for Bing. He continues; "Let me tell you something, Bing. In this business you've got to stand on your own two feet . . . if you remember that you'll go a long way. You're great, Bing; just great!"

Bommer leaves, and Bing, left alone, takes a pull at the contents of his hip flask, musically soliloquising on its therapeutice properties: "Salt and sugar — that's the booze — that's moonshine . . . Mr. McCabe's special whisky, are you going to be ridin' me, or am I gonna have to see which of us gets home first?", he croons. But in a moment of time, and by a scene change of the most basic economy (such as moving a piano from side to centre stage and adding a chair, etc., a feature of the entire play) there was Al Rinker on his week's trial singing with Bing. Again, "Five Foot Two . . . ", only this time given a more jazzy, scat-harmony treatment.

"Bing! I want to talk to you." It is his mother. She's hanging out her washing, and clearly in the mood to remonstrate with her fourth son.
"This law book; it hasn't been touched for a week!"
"I've done a lotta work on that, ma."

"Oh, no you haven't. It's still got the same bit of knicker elastic stuck in the same place as I left it on Sunday.", she replies in her rich Irish brogue. "Sorry, ma.", he says.
"Singing and playing golf. Where's that going to get you?"
"It'd be better to be a good singer than a bad lawyer.", counters Bing. But, reluctantly he agrees to study his law book some more, though with little enthusiasm.

Another scene unfolds, and Bing and Al are discussing girls and Joy Bommer, Hal's daughter, in particular. Al is taken aback when Bing reveals that he is having an intimate dalliance with this young lady. This affair gets an airing in the bedroom scene of no great daring — though the participants are both down to their 'scanties', to use contemporary terminology. In fact there's more crooning than spooning, with Bing whistling and ba-booing a little dialogue. Joy complains that he hasn't yet written the song about her that he promised. "I'll get around to it.", he replies. With Joy having now left the house Bing is again joined by Al who has some important news affecting them both.

"Bommer is going to put us out . . . he has a new, continuous projector. He won't need singers between movies any more. My sister, Mildred (Bailey), says she can get us work in L.A."
"L.A.! Jesus Christ, that's a thousand miles away!"
"Nobody does it like us, Bing. Nobody.", replies Al; and after much pressurizing from his buddy Bing reluctantly agrees to this adventurous enterprise, and by way of anticipation they do a lively rehearsal of Al's new arrangement of "My Blue Heaven". Shortly thereafter they are on their way but before very long, and with much spluttering and a final, ominous bang their Ford Model 'T' breaks down (off stage) and we see them on Weavers Ridge against a backdrop of stars being threatened by a moonshiner with a shotgun. Having no money they are obliged to sing for him. An unfortunate debut; but things are looking up.

Without lowering the curtain the 'scenery' is quickly arranged to represent the inside of the 'Orange Grove Club' where Crosby & Rinker — Two Boys & a Piano' are performing "Out-o-Town Gal", when in saunters none other than Paul Whiteman on the lookout for speciality acts.
"There's a couply of mighty talented boys from Spokane.", says the Club proprietor. "Spokane! Never heard of it.", replies Whiteman. But when the lively duo go into two full scat versions, with comedy patter, of "My Blue Heaven" and "Out-o-Town Gal" the monolithic bandleader is mightly impressed. "Bring 'em over.", he says, and introduces himself to the overawed young singers.
"I'd like you two young shavers to sing in front of my band — one hundred and fifty bucks a week." They can hardly believe their ears; but as they are currently contracted until the autumn Whiteman agrees to them joining his band in December . . . "In Chicago — the Windy City — where they've heard the best and dumped the rest!", he pointedly remarks. And so in due course, to an audience varying from Senators to gangsters, they make their Whiteman debut with the tuneful "Miss Annabelle Lee", the plaintive "Get Out And Get Under The Moon" and a reprise of their earlier "Five Foot Two", all of which are sung with great verve and bounce bringing loud applause from the live theatre audience; and bringing the First Act to a close.

New York — and things aren't going well for Crosby and Rinker. The curtain has opened up on their rendition of "Miss Annabelle Lee", and the noisy, 'Big Apple' audience are less than receptive. Afterwards, however, Matty Malneck, of Whiteman's entourage, seeks to placate their fears of dismissal. He tells them that for the meantime they can sing during intermissions and help with the curtains. Not unnaturally the duo are very dispirited by this turn of events. But Matty gives them a pep talk. "You're all American — the world wants American music, and we are giving it to them!"

At this juncture Harry Barris is introduced into the drama. He, too, is feeling very insecure as a likely surplus piano player. Needing a few dollars to settle with a bootlegger he approaches Bing and Al. The latter helps him out, but Bing furtively transfers a roll of banknotes to his coat pocket and pulls out the burlap of his trouser pockets to indicate to Barris that he is broke. Discussing their impecunious state Harry Barris sounds out the two singers to see if they would be interested in another partner — "the hottest pianist around.", as he describes himself. Rinker is keen but Bing objects strongly, envisaging the amalgamation developing into a touring vaudeville act "living out of a trunk." But Rinker and Barris are not easily put off and Bing grudgingly agrees to listen to what Barris has come up with — a few of his own compositions starting with a chorus of "Mississippi Mud" followed by "Ain't She Sweet", during which Bing and Al pick up the words as he plays. This 'rehearsal' is heard by Matty Melneck who brings it to the attention of Whiteman, breakfasting in another part of the hotel. Here we have the 'Buddha' image of 'Pops' as has often been described by Bing — the hug bandleader in a silk dressing-gown consuming a large tray of food.
"Can't a man finish his breakfast in peace?", he complains.
"He ought not to," replies Matty, "because he might miss hearing the best new vocal trio south of Canada!" Pop thinks Matty is wasting his time, but when he enters Crosby's room and hears them swinging expressively into the last chorus of "Ain't She Sweet" . . . "Oh, me, oh, my, ain't that perfection" . . . he's taken aback. "That's fantastic!", he declares. "No more lowering curtains, boys. Go to it!"

It's Chicago again. The town of bootleggers, speakeasies, organised crime, Thompson submachine guns and a killing every ten minutes. On stage Whiteman addresses an audience and with superlatives describes the next act. Then beaming from behind his waxed moustache he announces with a showman's flourish, "The Paul Whiteman Rhythm Boys'!" On they come in full flow with their specialised version of "Mississippi Mud" coupled with "I Left My Sugar Standing In The Rain", very well re-created here, and enjoyably received by the theatre audience. It is clear that they are an instant hit.

Change of scene. It is night time in the big city and Bing wanders alone. Exploring. Soon he is approached by a street walker and after a little while, with a prompt from Bing, she recognises him. She is enticing him back to her lodgings, though Bing is none too sure he

should be going. "Just to talk.", she says. Meanwhile, back at the theatre, the curtain is about to rise on their act and Bing is nowhere to be seen.
"He isn't coming.", bemoans Harry; in a considerable flap about the situation.
"He's got three minutes.", replies Al.
"I just wish he wouldn't keep cutting it so fine.", continues Harry.
"He's always been like that.", explains Al. "He always will."
In saunters Bing — "Hi, Harry; hi, Al!" — oblivious to all the fuss. Harry wants to have a go at Bing but Al 'shhs's' him. "Come on; the curtain's going up.", he says tersely.

Once more the instant transformation to the stage for their act; and what an act it is this time! Four of the trio's famous songs: "From Monday On", "Get Out And Get Under The Moon", "So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Together" and "That's My Weakness Now", all interspersed with light, comedy patter and sung with considerable verve and feeling for the style and period when Paul Whiteman's Original Rhythm Boys were a very popular act. The audience applause on this night was considerable.

The show is over, and Bing indulges in another soliloquy addressed to his whisky flask from which he takes a pull from time to time. His free hand plays a few chords on their piano, and he makes some mildly disparaging remarks about his partners' limitations. "I'm seeing too much of them and not enough of the right people.", he continues. "How am I gonna make it? 'Cos if I am I don't reckon you're coming with me. I'm gonna be the kind of success they'll never be. Why, hell, anybody can write my songs! Why, if I were singing the L.A. 'phone book people'd pay money to see and hear me do it." To prove his point he opens that cumbersome tome and croons a few names and numbers. However, his musical exercise is rudely interrupted by the ringing of the telephone. It is Paul Whiteman, and he is not a happy man. Indeed, he is very angry at Bing's frequent lateness and sometimes absence caused by his alcoholic revelling, and tells him so in no uncertain terms.

In the theatrical world, though, the popularity of the Rhythm Boys is still considerable, as a reading from 'Variety' magazine confirms. The trio . . . 'have the art of rhythm perfected to a stellar degree.', it prints among other plaudits.

Meanwhile, one 'Machine-Gun' Jack McGurn is on the prowl raking in the illegal liquor loot. He arrives at the hotel to collect from Whiteman where Harry and Al are clearly intimidated by him and his supporting 'heavy'. But Bing handles them with an assumed cool indifference, telling McGurn that Whiteman is out arranging the 'Old Gold Special' train on which the band will be touring the country. "I'll tell him tonight.", Bing says nonchalantly. The trio go into a short rehearsal of "So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds . . . " and when McGurn looks in again to invite them to a party, Bing accepts but puts down the other two with domestic reasons as to why they can't go. He departs leaving them bemoaning his absence again, and voicing the general air of frustration being felt among the Whiteman camp at the delays they are experiencing over the production of the film, 'King Of Jazz'. Everyone seems to be getting into heavy drinking; Harry and Al not excluded. They discuss Bing's showcase solo number, "Song Of The Dawn", that he's been given in the film.
"Mr. Blue-Eyed Boy!" says Al, somewhat bitterly.
"Pop says he's the worst sort of influence he's ever employed!", counters Harry.
But when Al leaves, Harry hits the booze and, addressing no one in particular, opines, "This bottle will be solely responsible for the Rhythm Boys leaving Mr. Paul Whiteman's band." The reason being that he can't pay the bootleggers and Whiteman is deducting the money from his salary getting him deeper into debt. By now Whiteman has become increasingly disenchanted with the wayward trio, first finding Barris slumped out cold in a drunken stupor by his piano, and then learning of Bing's automobile accident. The crash is heard off stage, and we see Bing paying off a passer-by — " 'til the doc comes." — to care for the slightly concussed young woman who was thrown from Bing's car. However he does not escape the full process of the law, for it is apparent that he has been drinking, and his confinement behind bars is highlighted in an almost macabre scene in which an adjacent, off-stage, cell is occupied by the apparently disembodied voice of a negro, arrested for murder, singing a soulful lament. As a result of this incarceration Bing loses "Song Of The Dawn" to John Boles.

The depressing jail scene is followed by a very much lighter one where the proprietor of a famous nightclub is out front making an introduction. "Ladies and gentlemen, the Coconut Grove is proud to present the hottest trio in town — 'The Rhythm Boys'!" They come on to applause, and Bing takes a nice solo chorus of "It Must Be True" to Harry's piano accompaniment. Then all three combine, unaccompanied, in a vocally harmonised version which (speaking personally) was quite unsuited and sounded unnaturally forced for this pleasant Barris-Arnheim-Clifford ballad. Perhaps the play's author intended to reinforce the feeling that Bing should go it alone on this type of number.

By now, Bing is beginning to meet more of the 'right people' with regard to helping his career along. He's invited by a senator to a party where a special pianist is provided for him — thus excluding both Barris and Rinker, who are not invited. Bing meets up with film studio people and sees that his future could be blossoming on the silver screen. He puts this idea to both his musical partners, separately. First, Harry; to whom he says; "There's more money to be made in the movies . . . you write the songs, I'll sing them.", and "I've seen enough of Abe Frank. Haven't you? I'm walking out on Abe next Friday. You coming?" Harry is downcast by these comments.
"Bing, I know a lot of people say a lot of things about you; but I don't."
"And I don't say anything about you Harry.", with some surprise in his voice.
Later, Bing is playing a round of golf with Rinker and comments unfavourably on Barris's singing before telling Al about leaving the Coconut Grove.
"Walk out on a contract?", queries Al: nonplussed by this revelation.
"Guess so.", replies Bing.
"Have you and Harry got your minds made up?"

"Harry's idea! I just went along with it.", Bing untruthfully replies.
"You'll sing solo?"
"Who said anything about singing solo?"
"Whatever you want, Bing; what ever you want.", says Al, dispirited by this turn of events.

When next Harry and Al meet they are mulling, scornfully, over an article regarding Mack Sennett's enthusiasm about his proposed two-reeler, "I Surrender, Dear', with others to follow, in which Bing sings the title song and 'plays himself' in the picture.
"You bet he does! He couldn't play anybody else.", expostulates an embittered Barris.

Now it is the penultimate scene, and the trio conclude the last few bars of their greatest hit song, "Mississippi Mud", when Bing steps forward and says:
"And now they even let me sing a few on my own. How's that, folks? Bing Crosby singing on his own! With his own, personal, Harry Barris composition ", and he proceeds to sing "I Surrender, Dear" through from start to finish. With the final evening's show at the Grove over, Harry turns to Bing and says:
"I can't believe it, Bing. It's been a long time with me around. How much longer with Al?"
"Well, times change, don't they."
"Not always for the better."
"We've had a good run, Harry. We've done all we can together. We'll see a lot of each other — I guess."

The play goes into the final scene, and a middle-aged couple are listening to the radio from which Bing can be heard crooning "Let's Spend An Evening At Home".
"Just incredible hearing him sing.", says the husband. "Remember when we saw the Whiteman band? Sure seems a long time ago.", he muses. "I wonder what they're doing now — those other two?"

A few seconds more and the curtain falls on that thoughtful comment, and the voice of Johnny Myers, as Bing, concluding the wistful ballad.

As we made our way out of the theatre the most popular summary of the play was that it was "very interesting". It is a remark that suggests the play fell short of hoped for expectations. But, on considered reflection, the production was probably more than we'd ever contemplated as a possible reality. After all, only the Almighty Himself could re-create Bing Crosby. Even then I have my reservations.

Bert Bishop

Thanks. Bert. Another member who made the trip to Westcliffe was the indefatigable John Marshall who supplies this overview in his own inimitable fashion.

Back there on the night I first saw it, March 30th, my view of "MOONSHINERS" was largely based on having survived the rigours of travelling to Westcliffe, spending an inordinate amount of money for the use of a box-room in a hotel and the general relief that Bing hadn't, after all, been thrown to the wolves.

I was, I believe, the first of the Crosbyana disciples to see the play and it could be said that as the days passed, jagged edges were buffed, minor holes filled in and some of the obvious cracks plastered over. Reports from other sources underline the fact that either repairs were effected, or I saw a different play from the "main party", a week later. Or maybe, as retrospect began its devious work, I am marginally more paranoid than most. In any event I do now see things more clearly and recognise that my relief was based on an insider's knowledge of the subject plus the fear that James Pettifer could have, had he been so inclined, made a still larger dent in the whole Crosby mythology.

Ol' Jim, I am now convinced, did in fact go out loaded for bear and if a series of blanks, rubber bullets and near-missess resulted it was not intended that way. I have, for my own recall purposes, listed the various shots fired and it makes morbid reading insofar as sensing that Jim had once sat looking at just such a list speculating how much powder he could affort to put into each round. Despite Bing's long life and career it now seems certain that when anyone sets out to destroy the man's image they all, inevitably, fall back on the surprisingly small stock ot well-tried "truths".

Here, straight from his not-too-well-thumbed copy of "THE HOLLOW MAN", they trotted out again and one couldn't help but wonder why it is that despite that lengthy career, someone like Bing really doesn't have a drama in him. Jim may not be aware that beyond the realms of strict Crosbyana, the average man-in-the-street really doesn't know much about the history. Had he been writing exclusively for us we could easily have floored him on a wide range of inaccuracies and, seeing the play, it is easy to dismiss most of the thrusts as neither here nor there.

But what of the innocent eyes, seeing this familiar figure as he goes through the scenes and is manipulated into being weak willed, treacherous, sucking up to hoodlums, tight with money, consorting with prostitutes, letting his partners down and more. Not a recipe that will get you sanctified, even if it is performed so ineptly and is over in such a flash that only the attentive eye and ear takes note of it.

Hearing back from two or three who saw the play, I had the impression that they, too, had expected much worse and consequently they were willing to let the rest bounce off. If I were more certain that this epic wouldn't surface somewhere else, perhaps in a tour of backwater theatres, much of my concern could be disposed of.

The music, naturally, bound the fragments of "drama" together with a good solid cement and had this been a straight-forward narrative account of Bing's earlier days, minus the "dark" inserts, one would have sat wondering how, out of this colourless debris, had emerged one of the great careers of this century. Charting Bing's emergence from early obscurity relies on eye-witness accounts from people who, even then, were developing a whole rack of minor axes that would be ground, year after year, as the acids of their own failures took hold.

When did you ever hear a bad word said about Como or Bennett or a number of other perfectly acceptable examples of stardom? No books written, the details

obscured by the fact that they still survive. Jolson, Bing and others make that ultimate bad career move of dying and there is some dreadul human impulse to see what really made these unusual folk tick. Often enough it is nothing very spectacular and while hard work, long hours and dedication are fine examples for the growing youth, the SUN wouldn't print them.

"MOONSHINERS" has no intention of posing any real question as to how greatness gets thrust upon a man — by people like us — and why it is that so many of us will cough up a small fortune to see the demolition men roll up with that big steel ball. This tawdry and sleazy production, minus its advertised suggestion of "dark and complex" may be as far as this aspect of Bing is ever likely to be taken. I'd go along with that, all the way.

John Marshall

The final word on this controversial play goes to Malcolm Macfarlane.

Taking an impartial view, Moonshiners was ultimately a competent production which was generally 'well done'. The singing in particular was impressive with Johnny Myers (as Bing) blending well with Malcolm Ward (Al Rinker) and Robin Fritz (Harry Barris). I would guess that the trio had worked extremely hard to duplicate the original recordings as even the ad-libs were identical. The script was heavily slanted against Bing and it would be easy to destroy it critically and factually. I gather that the production team had made constant revisions to the script as they too felt that much of it was unsuitable. If only a more balanced view had been taken, we Crosby fans would have had a glorious evening. As it was though, I was totally absorbed by the play and I enjoyed the experience. Press coverage was favourable and Johnny Myers was interviewed on local radio on a couple of occasions. It can be argued that any publicity for Bing is worthwhile in the long run. If nothing else his songs have been brought to the notice of a wider audience as the result of this play and the attendant publicity. Whatever our thoughts, Moonshiners will be seen to have made a significant contribution to Crosbyana in the 1990's.

One Sweet Letter from You

Malcolm Macfarlane as Assistant Editor deals with general correspondence with members. Malcolm will be very pleased to hear from members and his address is given on page 2.

Jim Lemon, 24 Lyndhurst Gardens, Belfast BT13 3PH.

Jim appeared on the Bob Crookes show on BBC Radio Ulster earlier this year and he subsequently received a pleasant letter from Bob as follows:-

"Many thanks for joining me on the programme and I'd like to assure you that I found your reminiscences on Bing Crosby most entertaining. However not only was it fun for me but judging by the phone calls I received after the programme there must be a great big untapped bunch of Bing fans around Northern Ireland.

It was sad to hear that Crosby stalwarts Frank Murphy and Reg Bristo had passed on but I'm sure the foundations they set up will carry on from strength to strength over the years. Please convey my best wishes to all the other Bing Crosby fans and I solemnly promise to play a Bing track on my programme at least once a month."

(Asst. Ed.: Well done, Jim, and keep up the good work in promoting Bing. I duly wrote to Bob, on behalf of the ICC, thanking him for his good wishes.)

Ralph Harding, "Crosbyana" 67 Shirley Drive, Heolgerrig, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid-Glamorgan, S.Wales CF48 1SE.

I received a very nice chatty letter from Ralph following my request for permission to quote from the Crosby Collector in the "Way we were" section. Here are a few extracts.

". . . Now to your request that you use extracts from THE CROSBY COLLECTOR. Let me assure you that you are welcome to use any material, extracts, etc from my 67 issues of the "C.C." and I would only ask that you acknowledge the original source. . . .

You may be interested to know that the Ralph Harding Bing collection is no longer complete. In the past year I have sold much of the rarest of records to collectors in Japan, Europe and the USA and my bank balance has swelled to the satisfaction of my Bank Manager. Initially it was a terrible wrench to realise that sixty years of collecting was being broken up but I had the satisfaction of knowing that these rarities would be going to younger, dedicated Bing collectors who would treasure them long after I will sit beside, Bix, Lang, Louise and Bing in that great heavenly recording studio. A year or two back, I could honestly claim to have one of the finest and most complete Bing collections in Europe and possibly the third largest in the world. Only Howard Levine and Jack Souther had larger collections (both of which I have seen and I spent a few days with Howard in Florida last year) . . . (Asst. Editor: see Trading Post for further details of Ralph's collection.)

I must congratulate you on the first issue of BING No. 93. The contents are interesting but the presentation is superb and obviously John Joyce is the mastermind behind the truly professional format. The old CROSBY COLLECTOR attempted to produce a good format and I led the field with professional front and back covers and even covers in colour. It is interesting to understand how I produced these coloured covers. I drew the cartoon four times in black outline on transparent sheets, each exact to a fraction of a millimetre! Then I coloured three copies with either, red, blue or yellow insertions (the three

primary colours) which in turn produced orange, green, purple and brown, depending on which transparency superimposed over the other. The four transparencies were passed to a printer who ran each sheet through four times to obtain the finished product. It was an expensive project but the printing of many thousands of sheets made it very practicable and added to the enhancement of the magazine. I still have thousands of the printed covers and you are welcome to them for free. (Asst. Editor: Naturally we have accepted this generous offer and whilst we cannot use the covers ourselves, we feel sure that members would be delighted to have them. The covers will therefore be progressively distributed with future editions of BING.)

The CROSBY COLLECTOR . . . grew to be a Frankenstein monster! At one time we had over 1000 subscribers and while it was making a profit, it became far too large for one man to handle. The time came when I was producing up to 100 pages per issue and as I was working a 9 to 5 job as an Accountant, every evening until the early hours of the morning was taken up over a typewriter producing the magazine. From the typing of the stencils, printing, collating, binding, posting, etc. it was strictly my baby and the inevitable happened when Diana had to introduce me to my children and tell them that this stranger who never saw them was their father. Family life, the chores around the house, gardening, maintenance, dining out, holidays all were an unknown factor in my life because the "CC" took precendence at all times. Eventually Diana said that either the magazine left or she and the children did. So I had no choice! I'm afraid the CROSBY COLLECTOR became an obsession and at the height of its fame, I had to bow out . . .

With so many good enthusiasts on the management committee, this should never happen to you. So you have my sincerest congratulations on a good magazine and a great format and I wish you well and every success for the future production."

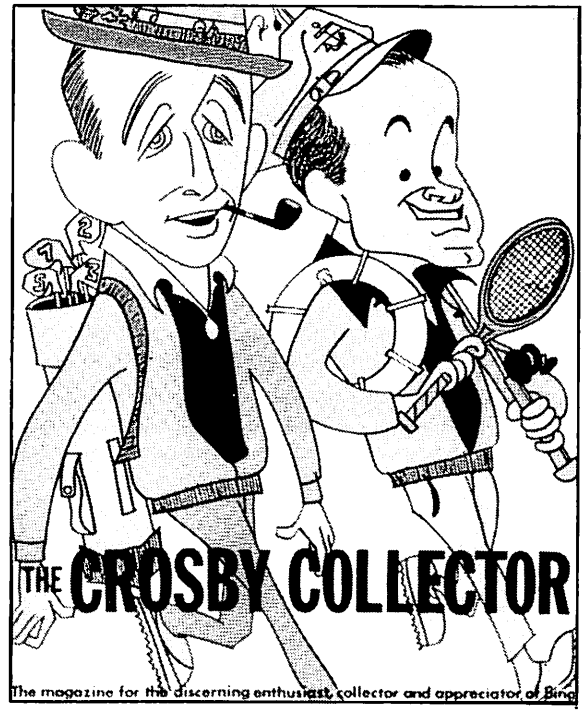
Mrs. Janet Snow, 102 Kings Road, London Calney, Herts AL2 1EP.

. . . I must nail my colours to the mast and say I ***like*** Benny Green. I have heard him say a lot of ***good*** *things about Crosby - and only take his "humour" with a good pinch of salt. Likewise I must disagree with the comments re David Jacobs - who must be given credit for often playing Bing and saying nice things about him.*

(Asst. Editor:- Janet was of course responding to Ken Merry's article in BING 94. Benny certainly gets reactions from his listeners and to be fair does feature Bing on occasion. He kindly gave very good coverage to the last "Chronological Bing" LP and I know that John McNicholas was grateful for this. Yet another members writes in support as follows:-)

Ron McCormick, 15 Glebelands Road, Knutsford, Cheshire.

. . . Is the 'bashing' of Benny Green ever going to stop. I wrote to Reg Bristo about this. His response was that I was a lone voice in Green's support. For several years I've been having a running battle with the BBC because I couldn't find much difference between the music played on Radio 1 and Radio 2



. . . During the last year or two there has been a change and Frances Line has said that Radio 2 is being aimed at the 50+ age group. Then I had a running battle with Frances Line over the dropping of Green and Dell last autumn. So, thankfully did many others. How wonderful that they have been restored. I find Green's comments thought provoking and his views given in an independent way and quite challenging. He knows his subject inside out. His flow of language is a delight. How witty are his comments and biting too. He plays records at times that he doesn't like. I'm sure he is taking the "Michael" out of Bing fans who write to him in anger. I wonder if he takes our magazine. Perhaps he would write an article for us . . .

(Asst. EditorL- Thanks for your thoughts, Ron. Benny has been put on our mailing list to receive a complimentary copy of BING each time and hopefully will read this. As a frequent listener, here's my message to him. Benny, I enjoy your comments but if you are going to keep playing well deservedly obscure songs by famous songwriters, can you play Bing's version of them a little more often? Better still play more of the songwriters' better efforts as Bing tended to concentrate on these and it would be easier to find his versions of them. We'll lend you the records or the CD's if it will help!)

Flavio Souto, Rua A. Romeu E.M. Filho, 201, B-13-ap.44, Jardim Castelo, 11085, Santos SP, Brazil.

I am very pleased to be a member of the ICC. I play the guitar and sing Bing songs and I have old records of Bing in 33, 45, 78 rpm in my modest collection. . . . I hope to form a Bing Crosby Brazilian fan-club so that the Brazilian people will come to know more about "the greatest singer in the world."

Mike O'Donoghue, 2 Worcester Gardens, Cranbrook, Ilford, Essex IG1 3NW.

. . . I bought the CD "Classic Crosby" 1931 to 1938 last week and am still delighted at the clarity and

freshness of the numbers. I was reluctant to switch over to CD but really the difference in reproduction is so marked that if one can afford to, then the pleasure of hearing Bing as never before makes it well worth while.

Gerry Didymus, 120 Francis Avenue, Southsea, Herts PO4 0ER.

Many thanks indeed for the marvellous BING 94 which arrived this morning, which marks the real beginning of a new era for the ICC, as it is one of the finest and smartest produced of the artist support magazines – fan magazines is far too trivial a phrase for them.

. . . As you may know I have two radio programmes on BBC Radio Solent, one "Starlit Hour" which is a general nostalgia programme (Sundays 2 to 3 p.m.) on which Bing is featured every week, as the most requested artist . . . the other is a show for BBC South and West, which goes out over eight local stations, and is "Big Band Sounds", on which Bing has also featured from time to time. I have been in close contact with Leslie Gaylor for many years, and he appeared several times on earlier radio programmes I did for the station.

. . . I have been a Bing fan since the thirties when it was his films that attracted me, then it was the wartime radio shows – and I well remember hearing his appearance with Glenn Miller on the AEF programme and Variety Bandbox, and I have of course got a fair show of his recordings, both old and new, although not as comprehensive as people like Leslie and others.

. . . Anyway, thanks for all the good work, Long may it continue.

Reg Green, 137 Crowstone Road, WEstcliffe-on-Sea, Essex SS0 8LH.

For those who own a pre-war clockwork gramophone, but have no needles! – They can be obtained from Ruth Lambert, 24 Churchway, Weston Favell, Northampton NN3 3BT. 600 needles for £3.50, 2000 for £8.50.

Fred Reynolds, 69 Heathmere Avenue, Yardley, Birmingham B25 8RQ.

Two or three Sundays ago I listened to Benny Green on Radio 2 and heard him strongly deny that the records he selected for his programme were in any way influenced by racial prejudice. He said that such an accusation had come from a Crosby fan. I knew, of course, that I had never made any such charges in my article about Mr. Green (which had been referred to him) and I then re-read page 22 of Mag 94. I do not know Mr. Merry of Doncaster, but in general his views on Benny Green agree with those that I had expressed several months before. His particular suggestion of the possibility of Mr. Green's racial bias, however, is one with which I do not wish to be associated. I do not think that Benny Green would deny having prejudices – in fact one of his weaknesses is that for a professional they are all too obvious – but I consider that Mr. Merry's slur is unwarranted. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for anyone selecting records of leading artists and composers in popular music not to include many by the ethnic group that has played so important a part in its development.

The Variety Tribute 1990

John Marshall writes to say that the fund for the 1990 tribute has already reached £526 as at 19 June. A full feature will appear in the December issue. Contributions direct to John Marshall, 39 King's Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD.

Lionel's Lines

Our friend Lionel Pairpoint tells us that he is "a broken man". Lest your imagination should run away with you, the cause it seems, is Lionel's generous offer to complete Reg Bristo's Kraft and Hollywood projects. The final straw, it seems was a kindly member who asked for tapes of "all Bing's radio shows, for all sponsors"! Well, having taken care of that in the morning, Lionel turned his attention to the afternoon to some wartime reminiscences.

They Can't Blackout the Tune

There will be few who will have missed the fact that, last September, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the day that the World went to War for the second time in this century.

The dubious 'celebration' of this quinquagenary, brought with it a small landslide of books, sound recordings and video films and to some of us, no doubt, the least of these might be the record/tape/CD/video releases from Max Bygraves ('Singalong War Years' Vols. 1 & 2). The unqualified success of these issues becomes even more startling, when we are reliably informed that 80% of the population can have no personal memories of World War II!

Historians of the future will find difficulty in identifying the most popular songs of that era, by lyrics alone. The majority contain no clue to the frightful events of those six years. We *do* have 'The Siegfried Line' (recipient for the laundry), 'There's A Boy Coming Home On Leave' or 'When They Sound The Last 'All Clear' ' but most songs, featuring the more overt references were of a jokey nature — 'Imagine Me In The Maginot Line', 'Could You Please Oblige Us With A Bren Gun?', 'What A Surprise For The Duce' etc. Others contain only the merest 'nod'. 'That Lovely Weekend', written by bandleader, Ted Heath and his wife, boasts just five words, '. . . Your kit to be packed . . . '. Even 'The White Cliffs Of Dover', (written by an American who had never seen the famous landmark until the late Eighties) holds only the brief, oblique reference that 'Jimmy will go to sleep, in his own little room, again . . . '

Many of the big hits of the day were neither rousing nor patriotic but simple ballads which, either by accident or design, happened to relate to the unaccustomed situations that the people found themselves in. The pathos of parting — 'Wish Me Luck', 'We'll Meet Again'; the anguish of separation — 'I'll Walk Alone', 'I'll Be Seeing You', 'You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To' or the 'better days are just around the corner' songs, exemplified by the aforementioned 'White Cliffs Of Dover', 'It's A Lovely Day Tomorrow' and 'Over The Rainbow'. I seem to remember the love song, 'I Don't Want To Set The World On Fire', being linked with and (to me), enjoying a sort of callous popularity, at a time when we were still suffering intermittent incendiary raids.

Next year, marks the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbour. May we expect a compilation of wartime songs from the most heard and the most popular of the popular voices of World War II? A voice which it is said, that during this period, could be heard, somewhere in the world, every minute of every day. Again, those same historians would be hard pressed to make any connection with the War Years from Bing's commercial output. The million sellers offer no hints — 'Sunday, Monday Or Always', 'Swinging On A Star', 'Don't Fence Me In' or the mega-hit, 'White Christmas'. Entertaining the troops in Europe, Bing always closed his programme with the song ('They'd holler for it, they'd demand it and I'd sing it and they'd all cry. It was really sad') but so peaceful is its theme that it has now achieved the status of a traditional carol.

Unconformably, a straw poll of my contemporaries uncovers a surprising diversity of fondly remembered Bing songs of the period — 'Beautiful Dreamer', 'I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes', 'Shepherd Serenade', 'Deep Purple' and inevitably but erroneously, 'South Of The Border'.

My own souvenir would be 'When The Moon Comes Over Madison Square'. I have often recounted my teenage fascination with the song and my 78 rpm index finger. . . . The spring of the wind-up gramophone had broken and was impossible to replace in 1941 when steel was needed for 'thing-ummy-bobs that were going to win the war'. So, the turntable had to be revolved, manually, by placing the forefinger on the record label and making a circular motion in an approximation of the correct speed ('The siren's gone. Stop messing about with that thing and come down to the shelter'). Unfortunately, this process caused such massive erosion of the label that eventually it disappeared, altogether. I often ponder on the fate of this record. Probably, thrown out, as junk, when I was away, serving a grateful King!

One song, with a militant flavour which might qualify is, 'Til Reveille', recorded a few months before America's entry in the War, although this actual title required the explanatory prefix of 'Lights Out' for distribution in Britain, where 'Taps' belonged at the kitchen sink or on the gas stove. Ironically, even Americans were puzzled regarding the origin of the title of this bugle call which is generally ascribed to General Daniel Butterfield, who, during the Civil War, suggested that 'Extinguish Lights' should have more soothing tones. The new bugle call was not called 'Taps' until many years later and no sensible explanation for the title has been given!

'Mandy Is Two' composed by pianist, Fulton McGrath, in honour of Johnny Mercer's daughter, with lyric by her father, has no martial reference but could be included, on some historical grounds as, allegedly, being one of the rare Crosby discs to be banned from being broadcast. Its sentimental theme was considered to constitute a threat to the morale of homesick servicemen. The ban was given additional momentum by the coupling of this item, on record, with the lugubrious 'Miss You' which would, presumably, have had the same debilitating effect on

the folks, back home.
At this same recording session, Bing cut a side which had been written, specially by Irving Berlin, for a newsreel short depicting the American Red Cross at work, entitled 'Angels Of Mercy' and later that year, it was Berlin again, who included in the score for the film 'Holiday Inn', the patriotic pot-boiler, 'Song Of Freedom'.
Three more songs would be guaranteed a place — 'The Bombardier Song', an unlikely and virtually, the last, product from the combination of Rodgers and Hart. The wistful 'A Boy In Khaki, A Girl In Lace', used, comparatively recently, as the opening theme of a BBC documentary on GI brides.
And a certain winner, which would appear, regularly, in Forces and family request programmes until long after the War — a surefire 'eye-mister' for boys away from home, for the first time and indeed, for their mothers', who yearned to hear their sons say, 'Hello, Mom' (Although some of the lines were destined to provoke ribald remarks if heard over the Tannoy in mess halls or after pay parades!).
There were two sides with the Andrews Sisters which would warrant inclusion — the somewhat anticipatory 'Vict'ry Polka', recorded in 1943 and soon after 'D' Day, from Joe Bushkin and John De Vries, 'There'll Be A Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin'.
Then, in 1944, he sang 'Dear Friend', an early collaboration by the new partnership of Rodgers and Hammerstein and an unveiled invocation ('. . . so dig down in your jeans . . . ') to buy War Bonds.
That is pretty near the sum and substance of Bing Crosby's commercial isues of war-linked tunes although, occasionaly, he would be prevailed upon to make a special, private recording for a specific unit or division of the armed forces. In this respect, the discographies will show that, in 1943, Burke and Van Heusen wrote 'Duke The Spook' for him. The title inspired by a top-hatted skeleton which was the squadron insignia of the 440th Bombardment Group of the USAAF. However, this type of recording never reached the public ear, as, even the extremely mild four-letter word that it contains, would never have been given air time during our highly moral war!
If Bing's work in the recording studios seemed to be lacking in wartime songs, the same could not be said for his radio broadcasts and perhaps, more about these, another time.
So, until we meet again, keep your thumbs up and say it's 'Tiggerty Boo' and I should be interested to know if anyone can oblige me with a copy of 'Only Forever' — the label on the 'B' side must be totally illegible!

Letter from Leslie

As Michael Crampton points out in his celebration of 40 years of the ICC one of the more enduring features has been the enthusiasm and enterprise of our friend from the Isle of Wight, Leslie Gaylor.

As a young lad in the 1930s, I first heard the old familiar saying which rings so true. "Time and tide waits for no man" and its meaning has never left my thoughts since the years just seem to roll by. That means that among many other things and happenings in life, the issues of BING seem to be delivered to our letter boxes fairly frequently, as they had done for nigh on 40 years.
I know that it is 40 years because of a letter from Michael Crampton asking me to comment on a few matters relating to the original formation of the club. The passing of the years has, I'm afraid, made me somewhat forgetful of how we got together — although I do of course have some fine memories of some of the things that have happened over the years.

I learned from Bing himself of course that he was most pleased and grateful that we were "in business" on his behalf. One moment I particularly remember came at Shepperton Studios during the filming of "Road To Hong Kong". We were in Bing's dressing room and I brought up that many of his admirers were sad that he had cut back on record making. "They don't want my records these days' Leslie" was Bing's immediate reply. "The record business nowadays just picks up anybody and goes ahead and gives the full exploitation. I'll make the odd record now and again if I think it stands a chance of success" said Bing.

At this point, I thought about the great Bing/ Buddy Cole CBS radio material that was in existence and whether Bing could give a helping hand towards getting some of it released. He replied that he had never had any sway with the record companies and when I said that the recordings were really great, Bing's reply was "I wouldn't know Leslie, I never heard them!"

Whilst on the subject of the CBS tapes, I did at one time have a lot of correspondece with Basil Grillo of the Crosby Office about them. Basil took a very businesslike approach to the release of the recordings, although he finally bought them all for Bing Crosby Enterprises. Some time later I brought them to the attention of Ken Barnes, who was of course working with Bing at the time. Ken showed great interest and of course everybody knows the subsequent outcome.

Last March, I accepted an invitation from Marjorie and Ted Nunn to attend a London meeting of the Sinatra Music Society. Christopher Riddle, son of the conductor, Nelson Riddle, was to be the guest, along with Alan Dell and Ken Barnes himself. After a delightful gathering, Ken drove me to Waterloo station for my homeward journey and we discussed the Buddy Cole material again. Ken said that when he had originally approached Bing about their release, Bing had thought it a good idea, whilst my own hopes however had been that they would be released in their original form, Ken is adamant that it was Bing himself who suggested that something be added. To quote Ken, Bing said "I think they would need some embellishment since we made them in a hurry and I didn't know what songs I was going to record until I got to whatever studio we were using". Buddy Cole had made up the arrangements there and then, said Bing and often finished them off in his studio at home.

A few years ago, Kathryn Crosby sent me a handwritten note saying that all the Bing/ Buddy material was now in Bekins Warehouse, but that it was due to be sent to her. Sooner rather than later, I intend to drop her a line to see if she will lend a sympathetic ear towards those remaining recordings being issued for all of us to enjoy. I will of course point out that it was Bing's own wish that this should happen.

Finally, I just wanted to pay tribute to some of the radio presenters who do so much to keep Bing's memory alive. Mandy Morton and Trevor Littlechild of Radio Cambridgeshire, Gerry Didymus from Radio Solent, Ken Gladstone-Millar of "Ocean Sound Light", and not forgetting the BBC's Alan Dell. I liked his recent comment bemoaning the demise of the LP. "There's something "warm" about albums", said Alan!

Leslie Gaylor

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £1 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from transactions undertaken as a result of these entries.

Please send all advertisements to the Assistant Editor, Malcolm Macfarlane, whose address is given on page 2.

Ralph Harding,"Crosbyana" 67 Shirley Drive, Heolgerrig, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid-Glam., S. Wales CF48 1SE (Tel: 0685 71411).

"I am in the process of selling my collection, one of the finest ever to be disposed of, item by item. The collection consists of 1190 10" and 12" 78 rpm records . . . 52 Whiteman/Bing/ Rhythm Boys VICTOR. 35 HMV. 16 Foreign labels. 72 English Columbia, 30 American Columbia, 20 Indian Columbia, 10 Foreign Columbia, 490 English Brunswick, 18 Brunswick Tests, 199 American Decca, 41 Foreign Decca, 28 American Brunswick, 29 French & German Brunswick, 10 English Parlophone, 42 Misc. (Banner, Conqueror, Okeh, Oriole, Melotone, Odeon, Vocalion, Harmony etc.), 98 Foreign misc including tests and acetates, etc.

42 Transcription radio shows (16"), 989 L/P's, EP's etc. To date about 90 78's have been sold including Victors, Columbias, Odeons and Parlophones. Collectors requiring specific items are requested to write, making appropriate offers for records. I have (had) every English record issued by Bing and a complete collection of every master pressing, including alternatives, issued on 78 rpm."

Bill Livesey, 39 O'Hagan Court, Brierfield, Burnley, Lancs.

Bill offers:-

40 L/P's for £50 (all Bing) for sale. Will sell individually if necessary. SAE for list. Also back numbers of BING (nos. 64 to 92) for £5 (plus postage) and cassettes for Philco shows for £1.50 each.

H.B. Bath, 8 Gorringe Close, Lower Willingdon, Eastbourne BN20 9SU.

"Sheet music wanted (or photostat copies). Willing to exchange for mint copies of BING nos. 35 to 90 (the lot)."

Bert Day, 35 Galla Crescent, Dalbeattie, Scotland DG5 4JY (Tel. 9556 611215).

"TAPE SERVICE, all types and speeds on reel to reel or C90 or C60, top brand cassettes, reasonable prices according to "Wants" and time involved." Send for details from Bert.

Brian Jones, 1 Gellhaf Road, Fleur-de-lis, Blackwood, Gwent NP2 1RJ.

"Wanted — Bing's 1953 book in hardback cover "Call me Lucky." Must have original dust cover. £10 offered plus postage."

Phillip Reeves, Coxwalls Cottage,,Ash End, Henstridge, Templecombe, Somerset BA8 0PN (Tel: 0963-63497).

1. Wanted:- 10" LP "Bing Crosby sings Victor Herbert songs" (LA 8600).

2. For sale:- VHS Video tape containing "Rhythm on the Range" and "Waikiki Wedding." Also boxed set of 3 LP's containing 10th Anniversary Collection (only played once).

John Manston, 23 Library Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 2BE (Tel: 0202 721585)

Wanted — a Bing ICC ink-stamper and some audio cassette sleeves. Contact John direct.

Mrs. Renee Chester, 35 Park Crescent, Eastwood, Nottingham NG16 3DS.

Renee has some excellent VHS videos of Bing. SAE for details.

John Joyce, Ravenswood House, Chowdene Bank, Low Fell, Gateshead NE9 6JP (Tel: 091-487-8761).

John intends to publish another Bing calendar in 1991 and would all members who would like to order one, please let him know as soon as possible. The price will be £2.50 and the profits from this exercise will again go to the ICC funds.

Also John still has a few copies of his excellent publications available. Details are:-

Bing — Just for the record (A complete encyclopaedia of Bing's commercial recordings compiled by Bert Bishop and John Bassett). Cost £4 (including postage to those in the UK).

Alternate Bing Crosby (the book of 'alternate' Bing takes compiled by Colin Pugh). Cost £5.50 (including postage to those in the UK).

The Road to Hollywood (the Bing Crosby films book by Fred Reynolds). Cost £15 (including postage to those in the UK).

John McNicholas Jonzo Records, P.O. Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7LD (Tel: 081-863-3141).

Volume 12 of THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY is now available. Please contact John direct.

(Asst. Editor: John tells me that sales of volum 12 have been very slow. If this marvellous series is to continue, sales will have to improve. Anyone who has not obtained their copy of No. 12, please don't delay. If sales pick

up, John hopes that vol. 13 (which is already pressed although the sleeves are not yet printed) will be available in October. Hopefully, vol. 14 will then be ready early in 1991 but it all depends on sales being made. Please support this important contribution to Crosbyana. Why not ask your record shop if they have got JZ13 — it might encourage them to order it!).

What was the mysterious picture on page 2? It came courtesy of Wally Oldfield, who enclosed the following caption:

"Film and radio celebrities paid homage to the memory of Russ Columbo, late soft voiced crooner of the movies, who was accidentally killed with an old Civil War pistol in the hands of his best friend, Lansing Brown jnr, Hollywood photographer. The picture shows pallbearers BING CROSBY, Lowell Sherman, Walter Wagner, Stuart Peters, Gilbert Roland and Sheldon K. Callaway with the casket. Services were held in the Blessed Sacrament Church in Los Angeles, 7 September 1934."

The Way We Were

by Malcolm Macfarlane

This is the spot in BING where we take a look at the comments being made in Crosby magazines of days gone by. Over the last few months, I have spent many happy hours browsing through back copies of periodicals such as BING, Crosby Post, Crosby Collector and Bingang. The reviews of Bing's latest records at the time are interesting and it is surprising how much criticism was made. Here are a few examples:-

Bingang — October 1959 Commenting on the new L/P "Fancy meeting you here" Les Gaylor says,

"You'll notice that this LP is not recorded in the way of quality as regards the artists voices in the manner that Decca engineers or CBS would have done it. This was because Bing and Rosemary Clooney were not in a soundproof chamber or remote front of the studio as is the usual procedure. Instead they were asked to stand in front of the orchestra because it was thought by the producer that they would feel freer as in concert style. This to my mind did not bring out the superb deep masculine tones as on that excellent recording of "Gigi" as recorded by Decca.

On the "Isle of Capri" for instance at the point were Rosie sings, "the boat whistle warned not to linger", this was a duet, but owing to it being too high for Bing, he was cut out in the final dubbing of the tapes. On Bing's stereo tapes was also recorded the bass fiddle so, in cutting Bing out of the duet, the bass fiddle was deleted. You can hear it drop out at the point where Rosie sings lyrics as above."

Bingang — December 1973
Frank Murphy commenting on the new single "Tie a yellow ribbon" says:-

". . . I have to state also that I am unimpressed with Bing's version and the backing by an atrocious dixieland group is just way out of touch with today's scene. Bing couldn't have known at the time of recording that his version would be getting the kind of action it is here and I'm sure it would have succeeded if a chorus and better backing had been tied up with Bing's fair version. As it stands now, I wish the maestro hadn't done it. The backing, "It's not where you start" is a shade better, so are the backing dixielanders, but this is one single we could have done without. I wish the British scene had plugged "Where the rainbow ends" the same as this one, the maestro would have sold a bomb on Rainbow."

Keith Parkinson's

CELLULOID CROSBY

A double helping this time around from the ICC's resident film buff. Keith kicks of with an accountant's view of "High Society", followed by more of his A-Z of Bing in the movies.

HIGH (GROSSING) SOCIETY

How good is a film? Read the critics in the newspapers and magazines and you'll know what they think about it and why. How financially successful is a film? Read the film trade paper "Variety" and the box office grosses are there for all to see. How successful is a film after it has been shown in the cinemas? Follow the television ratings revealed by audience research and watch the top ten video rental charts. How do people in the film industry rate a film? Find out from the annual Hollywood Oscar Ceremony — the members of the Academy vote for their fellow members. Combine all the above and you'll know what good looks like.

There is another way. It is very scientific and it is known as bums on seats. It dispels myths and confirms suspicions, but it is accurate because ticket sales measure how many people part with hard earned cash to see a picture of their choice. Nowadays video cassette sales have to enter into the calculation but for the purpose of this article we are looking into the past when the name of Bing Crosby on a cinema marquee had pulling power. Or did it?

London's prestige cinema from the birth of the talkies in 1928 until its redevelopment in 1961 was the Empire in Leicester Square. This West End showcase for M.G.M. films was the finest barometer for the popularity of that studio's product at the time of its London opening. Its seating capacity was 3,500 and all of M.G.M's films were premiered there before entering a general release pattern. From our point of view it was historically important because detailed house records were kept of all the films shown there. So we find the most popular week on record was from 11 May to 18 May 1929 when 82,849 people saw "The Broadway Melody". The biggest day was Tuesday, December 27 1938. On this public holiday 14,388 people paid to see Robert Donat in "The Citadel".

Our interest comes much later, when weekly audiences wer quite often below that Christmas high of 1938. Bing made two films in the mid-fifties for M.G.M. and they both played the Empire within a twelve month span. They were "High Society" and "Man on Fire". In the peak years M.G.M. made 52 'A' pictures a year, so extended runs were unnecessary, but from the late forties the tendency was to allow a film to play as long as it was good box office.

"High Society" was perceived as something special and it was booked to run over the Christmas, 1956 period. It became the Empire's most successful booking for that year. It opened on Thursday, 13 December, 1956 and the first week's audience totalled 46,728. Week two was of six days duration because of Christmas Day when the figure went down to 39,758. The New Year week then took the figure back up to 45,487. The figures for the full weeks were the best since "The Dam Busters" which began a seven week run on 16 May 1955. "High Society" ran for six weeks and for the last two of those weeks it played simultaneously at the adjoining Ritz Cinema, which was also owned by M.G.M. The story doesn't quite end there. In May 1958 the Mario Lanza starter "7 Hills of Rome" was booked for the Empire and disappointed at the box office. The next available M.G.M. film, "Raintree County", was not ready for exhibition so "High Society" was revived for one week to replace the Lanza musical. Its audience that week was 13,306, which bettered the 13,222 achieved by "7 Hills of Rome" on its London opening.

We value "High Society" as a fine Crosby musical, so the foregoing holds no surprises. Nor should the "Man on Fire" performance. A sombre black and white drama, as opposed to a technicolour musical, it did the worst opening week business of 1957 at the Empire when it had its British premiere on 28 November. 11,012 people bought tickets to see it. That's Showbusiness.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

As a postscript to the above let me misquote a well known expression: "As one door opens another door opens". I was in London obtaining information about the Empire and had half a day to kill. I went to the Museum of the Moving Image on the Southbank of the Thames. I wasn't too surprised to find that no reference was made to Bing in this permanent exhibition tracing the development of the cinema, but it was a satisfying three hours and good value for money. The latter stages of the exhibition are concerned with television and there is a console of nine TV sets dedicated to television advertising from the mid-fifties up to the present day. Like a lot of other exhibits at M.O.M.I. there is 'Hands On' encouragement. The visitor to the Museum becomes involved. I put on earphones, pressed button nuber 9, which traced Shell Petrol commercials, and Bing sang to me. At about the time he was filming for M.G.M. he made this plug for Shell and decades later it is preserved for posterity by the British Film Institute. Ironically it is in the small screen section, whilst Bing's main viewing impact was on the large screens of the Odeons, Gaumonts (and Empires) during the cinemas true heyday.

The A-Z of Bing's Movies

ARLEDGE, JOHN (1906-1947). In 'King of Jazz' (1930) John put his vaudeville experience to work when he sang "Has Anybody Seen Our Nelly' as part of a quartet and danced to Gershwin's 'Rhapsody In Blue' together with assorted others. This early film role led to second lead and character parts. The latter embracing "Gone with the Wind' (1939), "The Grapes of Wrath" (1940) and "I Wonder Who's Kissing her Now" (1947), his last film.

ARLEN, HAROLD (1905 -) Bing sang songs by Arlen in eight films spanning his main movie career years. They were:

"Sing Bing Sing" (1933)
"We're Not Dressing" (1934)
"Star Spangled Rhythm" (1942)
"Swingtime With The Stars" (1944)
"Here Come The Waves (1944)
"Out Of This World" (1945)
"The Country Girl" (1954)
"Pepe" (1960)

Arlen wrote beautiful melodies and these attracted the most talented of lyric writers. His collaborators have included Johnny Mercer, Leo Robin, Dorothy Fields and Ralph Blane. Singing the songs on the big screen was a Hollywood's Whos Who of vocal talent such as Judy Garland, Fred Astaire, Dinah Shore and Tony Martin. To keep this entry to a manageable length I will select what I consider to be his five most prominent non-Bing movies:

"Babes in Arms" (1939)
"The Wizard of Oz" (1939)
"Blues in the Night" (1941)
"Cabin in the Sky" (1943)
"A Star is Born" (1954)

To prove he was no singer of his own compositions he made an album for CBS in the early 1960s: "Harold sings Arlen'. His movie career petered out at about the same time but by then Hollywood musicals had left their Golden Years far behind.

ARLEN, RICHARD (1899-1976). Arlen acted in just one film with Bing when he played "Mondy' Mondrake, a student to Bing's Drama Professor Frederick Danvers, in the 1933 "College Humour". By then Arlen had been in films for ten years and had taken lead roles as well as providing major support, as in "College Humour". His peak as a silent star was in "Wings" (1927). From the 1930s onwards he alternated between hero parts in B pictures and supporting roles in A productions. In the latter category "The Mountain" (1956) and "The Best Man" (1964) stand out. He married and divorced Dobyna Ralston, his co-star in "Wings". He worked in films up to the year of his death.

ARMETTA, HENRY (1888-1945). Halfway down the cast list of "Too Much Harmony" (1933) we find the part of Gallotti played by Henry Armetta. This is where he was usually found, invariably playing a comic,excitable, thickly accented Latin. He only made one film with Bing, finding most of his film opportunities away from Paramount. He is best remembered for his later film roles in "The Big Store" (1941) with the Marx Brothers, and "Anchors Aweigh" in the year of his death.

ARMSTRONG, LOUIS (1900-1971). One of the best known musicians of the twentieth century, Louis was instantly recognised vocally or visually. His career involvement with Bing extended beyond film work, althoug he left a lasting impression of his artistry on celluloid with his Crosby pictures. The first was "Pennies from Heaven" in 1936, followed fifteen years later with a guest spot as an airplane passenger joining Bing and others in singing "Misto Cristofo Columbo". His last movie with Crosby was his most memorable, when he played himself in "High Society" (1956). He was born on Independence Day in New Orleans, the birthplace of Jazz. His trumpet playing made him famous long before his screen debut in "Pennies from Heaven". Some twenty two films followed, the last being "Hello Dolly" in 1969. During the last twenty years of his life his appearance in a film usually lifted its entertainment quotient immediately he appeared. Parts in "The Glenn Miller Story" (1954) and "The Five Pennies" (1959) attest to this. A CBS TV Documentary he made in 1957 sums him up quite well — it was called "Satchmo The Great".

ARNT, CHARLES E. (1908-). For three consecutive years this small part character actor appeared in Paramount pictures with Bing. He will be best remembered as the lunatic Benny the Goof in "Two for Tonight" (1935) when he initiated a soda water fight with Bing in a scene at the Purple Cafe. Flanking that appearance were bits in "Here is my Heart" and "Rhythm on the Range". He played a

steward in the latter and then proceeded to be type cast for the next twentyfive years as a meek busybody. He began his character role appearances in Hollywood movies in the early 'thirties and never made a major impact. Two of his bigger box office films prior to his retirement in the early 'sixties were "Sitting Pretty (1948) and "Wild in the Country (1961).

ARTHUR, JOHNNY (1882-1952). Jerry Colonna's sidekick in "Road to Singapore" (1940) was Johnny Arthur in character as the aptly named Johnny Willow. Arthur was a small whining comedian in character roles from the early 1920s. His bread and butter acting came from numerous "Our Gang" shorts but he secured parts in 'A' pictures like "Twenty Million Sweethearts (1934) and "Stage Struck" (1936), as well. "Singapore" was his only Crosby pic.

AS LONG AS I'M DREAMING *(Song)* "The Doctor's as good as Frank Sinatra" said a passenger on the sleigh on which Bing serenaded Joan Caulfield when he sang this song in "Welcome Stranger". A Johnny Burke-James Van Heusen composition so typical of the work they wrote to order for Bing's movies.

ASKIN, LEON (1920-). As Chief Ramayana, Head of the Headhunter Tribe in "Road to Bali", the then 32 year old actor was embarking on a Hollywood career which saw him typecast as the unpleasant foreigner well into the 1970s. Not normally seen in black face, he was usually the heavyweight slavic type in movies such as "Knock on Wood" (1954), "One, Two, Three" (1961), "The Perils of Pauline" (1967) and "Young Frankenstein" (1974). He makes a contribution to some memorable "Road" confusion in "Bali" when Bing and Bob Hope both expect to be married to Dorothy Lamour. What the boys don't know is that Ramayana intends marrying Dottie and killing his two American rivals.

ASTAIRE, FRED (1899-1987). Actor, Dancer, Vocalist, Composer and Choreographer, although it's the first two which concern us here in the context of Bing's films. He took top billing with Bing in two of the biggest grossing musicals of the 1940s "Holiday Inn (1942) and "Blue Skies" (1946). In "Holiday Inn" he played Ted Hanover, part of a showbusiness trio with Bing and Virginia Dale. His duets with Bing were "I'll Capture Your Heart" "You're Easy To Dance With" and "Let's Start The New Year Right". In "Blue Skies" he was Jed Potter, an ex-vaudeville partner of Bings, with whom he sang " A Couple of Song And Dance Men". It was as a result of carrying out a little on-screen hoofing with Crosby that he could tactfully answer "Bing Crosby" when asked to name his favourite dancing partner.

He was born Frederick Austerlitz and built his career on a dancing partnership with sister Adele which held together until the early 'thirties when she retired to marry Lord Charles Cavendish. That provided the spur to move into movies and it was in that medium that he found his greatest success. Adele was replaced by Ginger Rogers who was paired with him in ten films. Not wildly successful at the box office when they were released, they are now regarded as classics. The film "Dancing Lady" (1933) introduced him to picture goers when he partnered Joan Crawford. That same year he began an unbroken run of fine films which took him to the end of that decade: "Flying Down to Rio" (1933), "The Gay Divorcee" (1934), "Top Hat" (1935), "Roberta" (1935), "Follow the Fleet (1936), "Swing Time" (1936), "Shall we Dance" (1937), "A Damsel in Distress (1937), "Carefree" (1938) and "The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle (1939).

There is a theory that an entertainer's peak years never extend beyond seven, and in Astaire's case they are probably the 1930s. However the 1940s and 1950s saw him partnering such ladies as Rita Hayworth, Eleanor Powell and Cyd Charisse. In 1946 he announced his retirement but two years later he was enticed back with the opportunity to team with Judy Garland in "Easter Parade". Some memorable movies from this twenty year time span include: "You Were Never Lovelier" (1942), "Yolanda and the Thief" (1945), "The Barclays of Broadway" (1949), "Royal Wedding" (1951), "The Band Wagon" (1953), "Daddy Longlegs" (1955), "Funny Face" (1957) and "On the Beach" (1959).

"On the Beach" was his first dramatic role and it signified the end of his musical career, with one minor exception . That exception was "Finian's Rainbow" (1968) when he proved he couldn't dance like his old self. In 1974 he took a more sedate turn round the dance floor with Jennifer Jones when he had a character part in "The Towering Inferno". A tenuous link with Bing came with "That's Entertainment", also in 1974. He was one of the narrators for this assembly of notable musical items from M.G.M. vaults, which featured some Bing clips from that studio.

His last film was the forgettable "Purple Taxi" (1977) a French, Italian, Irish production. The last ten years of his life was devoted to public appearances and interviews which dwelt on his peak years and the magnificent contribution he made to the art of dancing in the twentieth century.

The Australian Scene

We have been aware that we have not always lived up to the name of the "International Crosby Circle" as often much of the content in BING has related only to UK activities. To correct this deficiency, we have asked some of our overseas members to contribute a regular newsletter from their country. Bob Machliss has agreed to write on behalf of Victoria in Australia and we are hoping to have another newsletter from the USA in our next magazine also. First of all, we hear from "down under".

MEMO FROM MACHLISS

As the Victorian Bing Crosby Society approaches its 13th anniversary (we came into being only a few weeks before Bing died), the Crosby scene in Australia could be described as "alive and well but hardly thriving". Only rarely are Crosby movies shown on TV and then, it seems, the same half-dozen — High Society, Just For You, etc. (The only exception was an apparently once-only season of four of the 'Road' features on the ABC network a couple of years back.) There aren't even too many commercial videos available, and most of those that are, like White Christmas, are imported copies sold at ridiculous prices — $49.95, which puts them out of reach of many potential purchasers. Certain radio stations at least feature Bing regularly (Melbourne is **awash** with 'nostalgia' shows at present, particularly at weekends), so the Crosby voice does get an airing in that medium.

The record scene, surprisingly, is looking up, thanks to the irresistible spread of compact discs. Although the majority of the more than four dozen Crosby CDs released overseas have not yet found their way here, sufficient have for many record stores to again feature a separate "Bing Crosby" section. Most welcome among those discs that **have** turned up is the 3-disc CBS set 'The Crooner'. Surprisingly (although perhaps not), the CD 'fourplay' (as EPs are now called) of White Christmas was widely available in the shops last season. Pressed in Germany, this features the title track plus Silent Night, Adeste Fidelis and Jingle Bells.

Readers of BING who are also members of the VBCS will know that we have been having our problems in recent times, all of them financial and all related to the publication of our magazine THE CROSBY VOICE. What started out as a simple roneod newsletter has grown into a 70 page epic that now costs around $3.00 a copy to produce! I won't even mention **mailing costs**. However, with well over 100 overseas members, we feel that we have to give them something of value for their money. Our UK rep Keith Parkinson and USA rep Mark Scrimger are a great help in keeping mailing costs down by receiving in bulk and mailing out to local subscribers at local rates.

The VBCS crisis was finally overcome late last year when we decided to raise membership fees and cut back to two issues a year, and the majority of members supported us in this. Fortunately, our six-times-a-year film nights are still well-attended and are more-or-less self-supporting. It seems that people still enjoy seeing Bing on the big screen and we try to choose supporting features such as the 1988 Irving Berlin tribute concert, TV specials not seen here like 'The Mills Brothers Story' and such vintage offerings as 'Elstree Calling' — all of which are well-received.

I guess that that's about it for the current Crosby scene, certainly so far as the VBCS is concerned. Readers who would like more information on the society are welcome to write to either Keith or Mark.

Bob Machliss

Derek Parkes'

Crosby Collectors Club

Activities over the last year have resulted in much success. Well over 200 parcels have been delivered safely, none lost and no reported breakages. Only one disc has been broken in the last five years and the cost of that was recovered from the Post Office. A few CD cases have been broken in transit to me and these have been replaced only when they were unusable. Replacements have to be paid for by the recipient so it is better to replace the case when danger of further damage is over. The perenniel problem of delays remains. Apart from some minor delays in handling your orders the main difficulty is non-availability. This can be due to the policy of the record producer, delays in the manufacturing process or the stocking policies of the distributors.

Whereas the shops in the High Street don't seem to carry many Bing records these days, the supply world-wide is quite remarkable — just count up how many new releases are listed in the following pages and there are rumours of much more to follow. Information on the following CDs would be much appreciated: Mr. Crosby And Mr. Mercer; That Travelling Two Beat; Bing And Satchmo — all believed to be released somewhere!

LPs

Complaints are still being received that LPs are being neglected. Just send in the details and they will be listed! Several are mentioned this time round in the following pages but new releases are getting, and will get, fewer and fewer until they equate in numbers to the current release of 78 rpm discs! The club has acquired a number of secondhand discs but mainly in new condition. A few are still sealed! A list of about 50 LPs is available now at fixed prices but offers at a lower price will be considered once the original cost of the records has been covered. Send a 20p stamp. The list will be sent second class mail. The extra 5p will cover duplication costs.

CDs

With the exception of just one CD, the discs listed in this issue of 'Bing' are in remarkably good sound. Ironically, the label of the odd one out is 'Always The Best' which just goes to show that you cannot always believe what you read. There is one problem which is very embarrassing where imports are involved. Just about all CDs are flawed but happily the correction network in all CD players hides the faults by fabricating data to mimic the missing bits using information stored on each side of the fault. It follows that the dearer the player and the better the correction network, the better the sound, with fewer audible faults. The flaws are due to holes in the silvering backing the CD (on the label side). The larger holes can be seen if a CD is held up against a bright light — just like stars. Check before you buy and don't buy if the stars are shining bright! The larger holes will produce a regular low pitched noise not unlike that produced by a bump on an LP. Quality machines may completely hide the noise so you may be informed on returning a disc that there is no fault. A visual check should confirm the fault. But what of the problem with imports? Just that it is not easy — nor cheap to get replacements. At the time of writing a batch of imports has just arrived and every disc displays a beautiful 'Milky Way'. Fortunately there is very little aural intrusion into what are otherwise beautifully recorded CDs. Perhaps under these circumstances some tolerance of the faults is not unreasonable. Almost certainly, without these few words many would other wise have gone unnoticed.

The three inch 'four play' CD, White Christmas (MCA 257 325-2 LO), which appeared so briefly in Australia, is again available to special order. All four tracks are on the normal CD issue so the little disc is more or less a novelty.

NEWS BULLETIN

Most collectors are eager to hear the news of new releases and this has highlighted a difficulty — but fortunately a difficulty that is easily overcome. This article is prepared about two months before publication and so with the time from the last issue it makes some of the news six months out of date by the time you read it. Time, indeed, for some records to be issued and deleted in this fast moving world. An attempt has been made to advise fellow collectors of interesting items in the course of normal correspondence but it proves very difficult to keep track of who has been told. To make this a far more reliable process and provided enough readers are interested, it is proposed to introduce a news bulletin which will supply essential information between issues of 'Bing'. Of course, all the information so supplied will be repeated in 'Bing' so the less eager will eventually get the same information. It is intended to supply information only of major items newly released (or newly discovered) anywhere in the world. This could include books or anything else of sufficient interest to Bing enthusiasts. Ideally, this should be a two way affair so please send in any news that you think will be of interest to others. News from overseas is especially welcomed. It is not proposed that this scheme should be anything very elaborate. It certainly is not a new magazine . . . just a means to pass on information so please don't expect anything more than useful notes which may help you find what you want more quickly. Unfortunately, anything like this costs money. May I suggest that anyone interested should send £1 (in stamps if you wish) plus 4 self addressed but unstamped envelopes. If you just want to try the new service, send a self addressed envelope plus two separate 15p stamps. Interested overseas readers should simply send in a self addressed airmail envelope. The first bulletin will contain suggestions for payment according to where you live. Please note that there will be nothing regular. You will hear as news is received provided it is of sufficient importance. The envelopes will form an important part of the system. No envelope — no bulletin! Please consider this arrangement as an experiment that will continue provided there is sufficient support.

THE FINIAL

After many years of rumour a breakthrough has occurred in turntable design — but has it come too late? The

amazing thing is that the Finial works in a similar way to a CD player — using a laser beam. No stylus touches the record and so there is no wear. What's more, the player rejuvenates worn records probably because the laser looks at unworn areas of the recorded groove. It has all the tricks of a CD player. It will play tracks in any order, repeat, list the number of tracks with playing times, total time and time remaining. It can play 45 rpm discs, LPs but not 10 inch LPs as yet, nor 78s and it only likes black records. There is no rumble and no groove noise — just two drawbacks. The laser can see and read dust particles which can be heard as a crackle between tracks. The second drawback is the price — £21000 plus VAT! Given a healthy vinyl market the price would certainly fall to a level that perhaps some of us come afford — but the LP is dying fast!

CD-R Recordable CD is just around the corner. 'Write once' machines are already in the professional field but interestingly, Philips has recently patented a system in which the discs are reusable. What makes it really newsworthy is that, unlike earlier machines, it is now possible to add extra materials to a previously recorded disc, or to alter a portion and the digitally encoded index will be amended. This allows the tracks to be played in any order — even in a predetermined preferential order regardless of the order of the material on the disc. An index of preferred order can be recorded on the disc. The recorder produces discs that are fully compatible with commercial CDs. Could it be that Philips have patented this system to surpress it to prevent the copying of commercial CDs?

ORDERS

1) Please pay in full when the exact cost is known ('DCP' price)
2) Send a deposit for each item ordered (double sets count as 2, etc):

UK Releases — £6 each Imports — £8 each

Please note that any price may have to be adjusted either way. Any loss or difficulty is the responsibility of the buyer but help will be given to resolve any problem. Remember that this is a non-profit making club.

Your order should be on a separate piece of paper. A letter is not necessary but if you choose to send one please keep it separate from your order. Please supply full details of what you want. An album title (eg: 'White Christmas') is often used on more than one issue. Please give all the following information:

1. Your name
2. Your address
3. Record type (LP, CD or cassette)
4. Record label and number
5. Name of album
6. Number of copies
7. Cash enclosed

You may optionally enclose a stamped addressed envelope for acknowledgement of receipt. This is especially recommended if you are ordering imports.

Send your order to:

D. PARKES
66 FIRS ROAD
FIRSDOWN
SALISBURY, WILTS SP5 1SW
ENGLAND
Tel: WINTERSLOW 0980 862688

A charge of £1 (or 10% if the order is greater) will be made for any item that is subsequently cancelled but not for items which cannot be supplied.

CONDITION CODE

Please refer to 'BING' No. 93 (Dec. 1989) for full details.

NEW RELEASES, REISSUES OR PREVIOUS OMISSIONS

OE² CD **BBC CD 766 CLASSIC CROSBY 1931-1938** UK £12 (£9 DCP)
CD **ABC 838985-2** Australia (Dep £8 DCP)
LPs: **BBC REB 766; ABC 838985-1** **Cassettes: BBC ZCF 766; ABC 838985-4**

Sweet Georgia Brown	(A)	You've Got Me Crying Again
How Deep Is The Ocean		After Sundown
Dinah	(A)	Some Of These Days
Love Thy Neighbour	(A)	Shadows Of Love
Once In A Blue Moon	(A)	Basin Street Blues w. Connee Boswell
Goodnight, Lovely Little Lady	(A)	Me And The Moon
May I?	(A)	Sail Along Silv'ry Moon
My Honey's Lovin Arms	(A)	I'm Falling In Love With Someone
Home On The Range		w. Frances Langford
		A Blues Serenade

Playing Time: 52 minutes Tracks: 18

Surprisingly, delays in Australia resulted in this item appearing first in the UK which completely nullified the Club's attempts to provide a fast service by importing from Australia. Robert Parker's processing will be loved by many. The orchestral stereo effect is interesting but the reverberation rather suggests that Bing is singing in a bathroom. The issued take is shown in brackets where alternative takes are known to exist.

OE¹ CD **PRO-ART E CDD 457 POCKETFUL OF DREAMS** USA £10 (Dep £8 DCP)

Learn To Croon (B793-B)
Stardust
It Must Be True
St. Louis Blues (A)
Shine
Brother Can You Spare A Dime?
You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me (A)
I'm Through With Love
Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams

The Day You Came Along
My Honey's Lovin' Arms (B)
I've Got To Pass Your House (A)
Love Thy Neighbour (A)
Love Is Just Around The Corner (A)
A Fine Romance
Alexander's Ragtime Band w. Connee Boswell and Eddie Cantor
Small Fry (A)
I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams

Playing Time: 56 minutes

Tracks: 18

This issue nicely complements the Parker release as they both cover exactly the same period. At first it seemed that there was no duplication — different takes of 'My Honey's Lovin' Arms' have been used but 'Love Thy Neighbour' seems to be the same on both issues.

OE⁰ **CD CBS SPECIAL PRODUCTS A2 201 THE BING CROSBY STORY — Vol. 1** USA £19 (£16 DCP)
(LPs and cassettes were issued previously and may be still available)

Disc 1
Mississippi Mud w. F. Trumbauer
Wa-Da-Da
'Tain't So, Honey, 'Tain't So
My Suppressed Desire
Makin' Whoopee!
I'll Get By
If I Had You
Susianna
Let's Do It, Let's Fall In Love
The Spell Of The Blues
My Kinda Love
Till We Meet
Louise
Louise (Rhythm Boys)
I Kiss Your Hand, Madame
Baby Oh Where Can You Be?

Disc 2
Can't We Be Friends
Without A Song
Gay Love
If I Had A Talking Picture Of You
After You've Gone
Sweet Sue, Just You
You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me
Livin' In The Sunlight, Lovin' In The Moonlight
St Louis Blues (A)
St Louis Blues (B)
How Long Will It Last
My Woman
Paradise (B)
Lord, You Made The Night Too Long
Sweet Georgia Brown (A)
Cabin In the Cotton

The two LP set was originally issued (1967), in mono in the UK but in the States sets were also available in 'electronically re-channeled stero'. It sounds as though the original mono tape was used for the CD issue. Some surface noise is present but there is no added echo. All the LP covers give 'Paradise' as being take A but checking it against the details given in Colin Pugh's book 'Alternate Bing Crosby' it appears to be take B. This has been confirmed by checking it against 78s of both takes. 'Vol 1' does not necessarily mean that a second set is to follow. No set labelled 'Vol 2' appeared on the LP but the double LP set 'Bing Crosby In Hollywood — 1930-1934' would do nicely. The CDs are not available separately.

OE⁰ CD **MCA MCAD 31367 SWINGING ON A STAR** USA £8 (Dep £8 DCP)
LP **MCA 31367 Cassette MCA 31367** (Dep £8 DCP)

Road To Morocco w. Bob Hope (A)
Moonlight Becomes You
Ain't Got A Dime To My Name
Constantly
Sunday Monday Or Always
If You Please

Going My Way
Swinging On A Star
The Day After Forever (A)
Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (DLA 3895)
Ave Maria
Silent Night (DLA 3026)

Playing Time: 34 minutes

Tracks: 12

This is the third CD release from the 'Bing's Hollywood' series of 15 LPs issued originally in 1962. Please note that LPs and cassettes are also now available of this and the previous two recent reissues. The first four songs from the film 'Road to Morocco', the next two from 'Dixie' and the remainder from 'Going My Way'. The quality is good, the songs are excellent and the price reasonable. How much more convenient it would be to have two of the original LPs issued on each CD.

OE⁰ CD **DECCA 25P2-2833 NEW TRICKS** Japan £20 in UK!

When I Take My Sugar To Tea
On The Alamo
I'm Confessin'
Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea
Georgia On My Mind

Avalon
Chinatown, My Chinatown
If I Could Be With You
Softly As In A Morning Sunrise
Alabamy Bound

Chicago
You're Driving Me Crazy
More Than You Know
Rain

Playing Time: 37 minutes
Tracks: 14

Short on time and high on price — but what a beautifully recorded CD. If you enjoy Bing with The Buddy Cole Trio this really is a must — if you have the cash to spare! The last two tracks, 'More Than You Know' and 'Rain' add a bonus of 6½ minutes to CD users as they do not appear on the corresponding LPs issued throughout the world.

OE⁰ CD **MCA 256 137-2 16 ORIGINAL WORLD HITS — GOLDEN GATE COLLECTION** Australia

Deep In The Heart Of Texas
Poinciana
San Fernando Valley
Amor
Long Ago And Far Away
You Belong To My Heart
Chatanooga Shoe Shine Boy
A Gal In Calico
Siouz City Sue
Ballerina
Moonlight Bay
In A Little Spanish Town
Mule Train
Riders In The Sky
La Vie En Rose
Symphony

Playing Time: 45 minutes
Tracks: 16

Is it because the songs are somewhat later than on many of the CDs we've had issued but here again the sound is very pleasant? The disc was pressed in Germany but unlike so many other CDs from that country it is completely free of heavy added reverberation.

-4 to 1 CD **ALWAYS THE BEST ALW060 CROONERS Vol 1 ORIGINALS** EEC £8 in UK
F & E (Sound quality very variable)
⁰ to ²

Lady In The Stamp Collection (1938)
Please Mr Sun (1952)
When The Midnight Train Leaves Alabama (1938)
Glow Worm (1952)

Playing Time: 56 minutes
Tracks: 20

'Always The Best'. What a strange name for a label! It certainly isn't the best, but it could be the worst CD to feature Bing. The sound of this disc is very variable and unfortunately the poorest quality is to be found on the Bing tracks. The songs are interesting as they all come from radio. Approximate dates have been added — but without direct comparison with the originals so they could be wrong. The 1938 titles are a bit suspect. The second is probably 'When the midnight choo-choo leave for Alabama'. The paper inserts vary the CD title. The front gives 'Originals 20 Crooners Vol 1' whereas the 20 is omitted from the back. Some of the twelve artists featured on this disc seem to be far removed from being crooners but nevertheless several of the tracks are quite pleasant. Other singers include: Vic Dana; Frankie Laine; B.J. Thomas; Al Jarreau; Sam Cooke; etc.

-lE⁰ CD **THE ENTERTAINERS CDB 1405 THE CROONERS** EEC £10 in UK
Brief mention should be made of this 3 CD boxed set previous released discs:

	Disc 1:	CD 0213 FRANK SINATRA	24 tracks
-E¹	Disc 2:	CD 0248 THE BEST OF BING CROSBY	23 tracks
	Disc 3:	CD 0224 DEAN MARTIN THAT'S AMORE	26 tracks

The playing time of the three CDs is given as 'appr. 3½ hours of music'.

The Bing disc is identical to the solo disc issued originally in 1987 except that the earlier disc is labelled 'manufactured in France'.

OE⁰ CD **CONIFER CDHD 166 THE GREAT STARS SALUTE IRVING BERLIN** UK £6 (DCP £7)

How Deep Is The Ocean?

Playing Time: 60 minutes
Tracks: 19

With most of the tracks coming from the '30s, one film soundtrack and one 1924 pre-electric recording, the sound is a little variable — but acceptably so. The disc is overflowing with nostalgia and if that is your cup of tea then check over this release. You'll find Rudy Vallee, Fred Astaire, Connee Boswell, Eddie Cantor, Ginger Rogers, Dick Powell, Al Jolson, Al Bowlly and others.

OE⁴ CD **PRO-ARTE CDD 490 BIX BEIDERBECKE — JAZZ ME BLUES** USA £10 (DCP £8 Dep)

Mississippi Mud w. F. Trumbauer
From Monday On (A41689-6)
Changes (3)

All of the recordings on this disc are more than sixty years old but there is no need to make any excuse for the sound — it's amazing even without the use of a computer. The touch of reverberation is just right too. Bix sounds great too — but there is some surface noises here and there.

OE⁰ CD **THE COLLECTION OR0072 BIX BEIDERBECKE** UK £3.50 (DCP £4)

There Ain't No Sweet Man	(2)	You Took Advantage Of Me
From Monday On	(41689-4)	'Tain't So, Honey, 'Taint So
Mississippi Mud	(41696-3)	Because My Baby Don't Mean Maybe

Playing Time: 61 minutes Tracks: 20

It appears that Object Enterprises Ltd have increased the price of The Collection issues, but at £3.50 for a disc in this superb condition with 20 tracks, this is a real bargain. Some confusion arose in identifying the take of 'From Monday On'. Without going into too much detail, it is recommended that those of you using Colin Pugh's book 'Alternate Bing Crosby' should disregard the second variation. Take 3 can be identified using the first variation and takes 4 and 6 can be easily differentiated by the word difference in the quoted third variation. Detecting the sound of 'w', as given in the second variation, can lead to errors without direct comparison of the takes. Fully recommended if the music is to your taste.

??? LP (Boxed Set) **BIX VOLUME 1 SINCERELY BIX BEIDERBECKE** USA £185 in UK

BIX 6	Changes (takes 2 and 3)	
BIX 7	Mary (2 and 4)	Mississippi Mud w. F. Trumbauer
BIX 8	There Ain't No Sweet Man (2 and 3)	From Monday On (41689-3)
	Sunshine (2 and 3)	
BIX 9	Mississippi Mud (41696-2 and 3)	From Monday On (41689-4 and 6)
	High Water	
BIX 10	Metropolis (take 3 only)	Loveable

??? LP (Boxed Set) **BIX VOLUME 2 SINCERELY BIX BEIDERBECKE** USA Sold with Vol. 1.

BIX 11	I'm Afraid Of You (3 and 4)	My Pet (1, 2 and 3)
BIX 12	It Was The Dawn Of Love (1, 2 and 3)	Grieving
	Dancing Shadows	Do I Hear You Saying?
	Louisiana (1 and 3)	You Took Advantage Of Me
BIX 13	La Paloma (2 and 6)	Constantinople (2 and 3)
	La Golondrina	
BIX 14	'Tain't So, Honey, 'Tain't So	That's My Weakness Now
	I'd Rather Cry Over You	Georgie Porgie
	I'm On The Crest Of A Wave	Because My Baby Don't Mean 'Maybe' Now
BIX 16	Christmas Melodies	
BIX 17	I'm In A Seventh Heaven	Reachin' For Someone
	Little Pal	
BIX 18	Oh! Miss Hannah	Your Mother And Mine
	Orange Blossom Time	At Twilight
BIX 19	Waiting At The End Of The Road	Side By Side (4)

Playing Time: (20 LPs): Approx. 16 hours! Tracks: 287

This really is a superb set produced by Sunbeam Records, Inc. including almost everything ever recorded (and still available) by Bix Beiderbecke. Included with this double boxed set is a 150 paged book by Chip Deffaa, 'Bix Beiderbecke: An Appreciation' which includes 'The Beiderbecke Story', a bibliography and the details of the records which must be almost a complete discography. For the Bing collector 'Sunshine' (take 2) appears for the first time on record but this is still not a complete compilation of the Bing and Bix tracks as Metropolis, part 3, take 4 is missing — simply because takes 3 and 4 are virtually identical. It is the rarer take that is used here — one with a very slight fluff in Bix's playing. Remastering is by John R.T. Davies which should ensure the highest standard available — but there is too much to check for sound quality.

?E⁰ 6 CDs Boxed **READER'S DIGEST RDCD 121-6 THE BING CROSBY YEARS** UK £40
(also available on 8 LPs and 4 double length cassettes)

Playing Time: 5½ hours Tracks: 112

Space precludes the listing of the 112 tracks on this set, whilst copyright prevents us from reprinting the Reader's Digest publicity material. Not all tracks are Bing — less than half in fact.

Technically, this set is interesting as all the tracks have been processed by CEDAR — microcomputer restoration designed to remove noise and imperfections plus equalisation. At first the sound seemed unreal — the treble was harsh and the bass thumped but finally, by cutting *both* by 2 to 3 points on the usual scale, the sound became pleasant. It seems that the system is being used to stretch the sound more than is comfortable with just too much treble and bass boost. Happily the background noise is very quiet and, provided you can adjust treble and the bass separately, a good sound should be obtainable. Where alternative takes are known to exist, the one used in every case is the A take. Other tracks have not been checked for possible alternatives.

With the introduction of the CDs many thought the days of sleeve notes was gone. Here we have a good booklet of over 40 pages tucked into the front cover of the CD set! Good but admittedly not as good as a 12in x 12in insert that may be in the LP set. If you are not yet fully decided to buy this set, a further inducement is a selection of 14 Glenn Miller tracks taken from radio which comes 'free' with 'The Crosby Years'. This additional material is similarly CEDAR processed but the sound is a little rough.

TO ORDER: Write to: The Reader's Digest Association Ltd.,
7 - 10 Old Bailey
London EC99 1AA

State: LPs, CDs or cassettes of 'THE BING CROSBY YEARS'

Add your name and address.

Send no money as you will be billed with the option of paying in full or in four instalments. LPs and Cassettes are somewhat cheaper — about £35, post included. Contractual difficulties may make it impossible for overseas collectors to be supplied direct. In case of difficulty set may be purchased through DCP.

A COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF COMPACT DISCS THAT FEATURE BING CROSBY

Compiled jointly by COLIN PUGH and DEREK PARKES

NB: As with Part 1 (BING' No. 94) the listed countries indicate where the CDs are known to have been released. This does not preclude the possibility of them having been released elsewhere.

Part 2: GUEST APPEARANCES

These are essentially CDs in which Bing is not the main artist. The number preceding the CD title indicates the number of tracks where Bing can be heard.

Entertainers CD0276	UK	1	Al Jolson (The Singing Fool)
MCA MCAD-3106	USA	1	Andrews Sisters — Rarities
BBC CD 667	UK	2	Best Of The Classic Years In Digital Stereo, The
BBC CD 601	UK	1	Bix Beiderbecke
The Collection OR0072	UK	6	Bix Beiderbecke
Bluebird ND86845	EEC)	8	Bix Beiderbecke — Bix Lives
Bluebird CD6845-2	USA)		
Dejavu DVCD 2049	UK	2	Bix Beiderbecke Collection, The
Pro-Arte CDD 490	USA	3	Bix Beiderbecke — Jazz Me Blues
Dejavu DVRFCD 14	UK	3	Bix Beiderbecke Story, The
Dejavu DVLP 2124	UK	9	Bob Hope Collection, The
Pickwick PWK 082	UK	5	Christmas With The Andrews Sisters
BBC CD 3007	UK	3	Classic Hoagy Carmichael . . . 3 CD set
Entertainers CDB 1405	UK	23	Crooners, The . . . This is a boxed set that contains 3 CDs: CD 0213 Frank Sinatra CD 0248 The Best Of Bing Crosby CD 0224 Dean Martin That's Amore
Always The Best ALW060	EEC	4	Crooners Originals Vol. 1
BBC CD 711	UK	1	David Jacobs At Your Request
Dejavu DVCD 2118	UK	1	Diva Collection, The
SPA CD YDG 74618	UK	1	Fantastic 50's, The
SPA DBG 2-53004	EEC	1	50 Hits From The Fantastic 50's . . . 2 CDs The second CD is identical to the previous item.
Scana 7706/7	UK	2	From The Time You Say Goodbye
MFP CD-MFP 6057	UK	2	Great Entertainers, The Volume 2
Conifer CDHD 166	UK	1	Great Stars Salute Irving Berlin, The
Dejavu DVRECD 26	UK	2	Hollywood Musicals, The
ASV CD AJA 5011R	UK	1	Hollywood Sings
Accord 129011	UK	3	Hollywood Stars
Conifer TQ 157	UK	1	Hooray For Hollywood
Entertainers CD 0244	France	1	Hurray For Hollywood
Columbia CGK 40035	USA	1	Irving Berlin: A Hundred Years
Verve 835 450-2	UK	1	Irving Berlin — Always
MCA MCAD-39324	USA	3	Irving Berlin — 100th Anniversary Collection
Conifer TQ 143	UK	1	Irving Berlin Songbook, The
Pickwick PWK 083	UK	3	It's Christmas Time Again
MCA MCAD-42212	USA	2	Jascha Heifetz — The Decca Masters, Vol 2
(No label name) BLN 09	UK	1	Jazz Singers
SPA CD YDG 74619	UK	4	Jukebox Saturday Night — 24 Hits From The Fabulous 40s
Conifer TQ 153	UK	1	Love Is The Sweetest Thing
ABC 836 166-2	Australia	1	Love Songs — 1929 to 1935
BBC CD 651	UK	1	Identical to above

Conifer TQ 132	UK	1	Makin' Whoopee — Favourites Of Stage And Screen
Entertainers CD 0200	UK	5	Merry Christmas
Lotus CD 50013	UK	3	Merry Christmas
JSP JSPCD 301	UK	4	Mills Brothers, The — Chronological Vol 1
JSP JSPCD 302	UK	2	Mills Brothers, The — Chronological Vol 2
Conifer TQ 152	UK	2	Mills Brothers, The — Tiger Rag
ABC 836 172-2	Australia	1	Movie Musicals — 1927 to 1936
ABC CD 16002	Australia	1	Identical to above
BBC CD 654	UK		Identical to above
Conifer TQ 154	UK	1	Night And Day — Balladeers Of The 30s
Columbia CK 40847	USA	1	1930, The — The Singers
BBC CD 708	UK	2	Other Side Of 'The Singing Detective', The
Pro-Arte CDD 437	USA	9	Paper Moon — Paul Whiteman
RAC 9678-2-R	USA	8	Paul Whiteman — The Victor Masters
BBC CD 2007	UK	3	Sentimental Journey — The Love Songs of World War II 2 CD set
Reprise 1016-2	USA	1	Sinatra: A Man And His Music . . . 2 CD set
BBC CD 608	UK	2	Singing Detective, The
Entertainers CD 0204	UK	1	Starparade
Scana 77011/12	UK	1	Swing That Music
Concord Jazz CCD 4050	EEC	1	Tribute to Duke, A
Pickwick PWK 084	UK	2	We Wish You A Merry Christmas
SPA CD-YDG 74621	UK	2	When I Fall In Love — 24 Love Songs

The next issue of 'BING' will bring you an update to parts 1 and 2 of this discography. Hopefully, it will also introduce you to some of the 'unknown' Bing CDs. This, of course, is the most difficult part of the discography to produce since we don't have the CDs and many exist as rumours only. Following the publication of Part 1 of this discography only two people made contact — but this introduced us, and you the readers, to three additional CDs. This is now an appeal to everyone to check your discs against those listed to date plus those shown in this 'BING' under the 'New Releases . . . ' column. Initially, just send details of the name of the unlisted CD with the release number. You will be advised of any additional information that may be required. Dig around in the 'old grey matter' and if you have some memory of an item not listed please inform us. Send your letters to Derek (address on page 2). Thank you.

Membership renewals fall due on 1 January on each year, and should be sent, together with remittance to Michael Crampton at the address shown above. Subscription rates effective 1 January 1990 are:

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Australia	£10.50per annum

All remittances should be paid in £ sterling, payable to "Michael Crampton — ICC".
All articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to Ken Crossland.
Readers' letters and material for inclusion in Trading Post should be sent to Malcolm Macfarlane.
Any other correspondence concerning membership or other aspects of club affairs should be sent to Michael Crampton.

Cover photograph courtesy of Tony Carpenter.

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CROSBY CLUBS AROUND THE WORLD

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby Clubs.

Please write to the appropriate address for details of membership

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Mark Scrimger, President
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That's all, folks! Copy date for December issue is 15 October

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